THE MAGAZINE OF

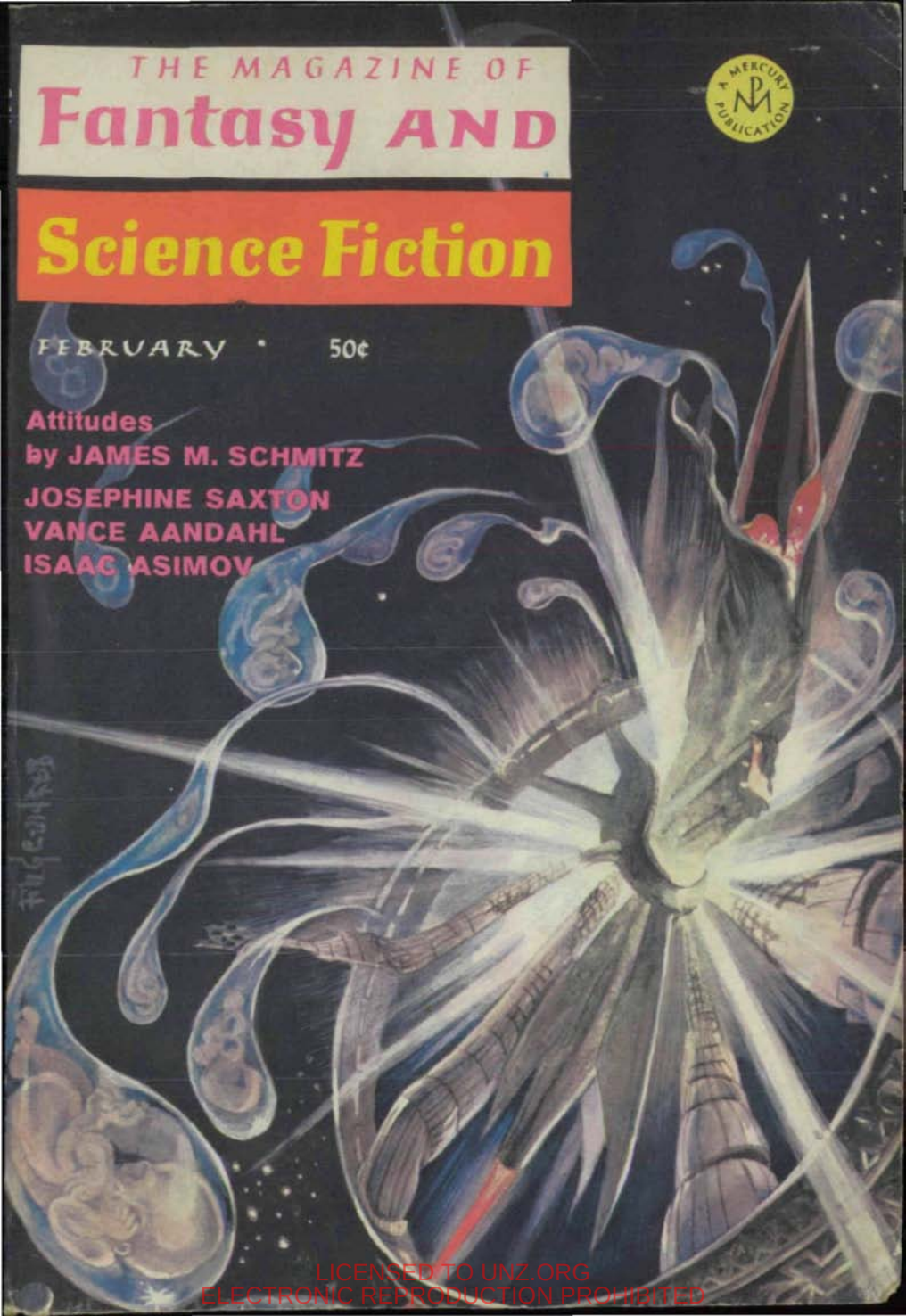
Fantasy AND Science Fiction

A MERCURY PUBLICATION

FEBRUARY • 50¢

Attitudes
by JAMES M. SCHMITZ

JOSEPHINE SAXTON
VANCE AANDAHL
ISAAC ASIMOV



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Enter the world of the future... UFO's...outer space...

Take any 3 SCIENCE FICTION BOOKS for only $1

when you join the Science Fiction Book Club and agree to accept only four books during the coming year.

YES—even the two-volume set at left counts as only a single choice!

How the Club works: Each month it offers a really superb new science fact or fiction book at a fraction of its regular price. Even though these books sell for $4.95, $5.95 and more in their original editions, Club members get them for only $1.49 each—in special full-length, hard-cover editions—unless you select an extra-value book at slightly higher price. And the Club tells you in advance what each monthly selection will be. During your trial membership, you agree to take as few as four books in the coming year. Cancel any time thereafter.

No-Risk Guarantee: If not delighted with introductory 3-book shipment, return books within 10 days to cancel membership. Otherwise you will be enrolled in the Club as a Trial Member. Mail coupon today to Science Fiction Book Club, Garden City, New York 11530

A TREASURY OF GREAT SCIENCE FICTION
Edited by Anthony Boucher

600. A giant two-volume collection of great science fiction reading. Over 1,000 pages of exciting fiction—four full-length novels, twelve novelettes, eight short stories by Ray Bradbury, Robert A. Heinlein, A. E. van Vogt, Poul Anderson, Arthur C. Clarke, Theodore Sturgeon, Alfred Bester, and a dozen more. Counts as 1 choice. Pub. ed. $5.95

600. **Killer Thing** by Kate Wilhelm. A scientist in the 23rd century develops a robot with a laser eye. Pub. ed. $3.95

643. **The Past Through Tomorrow** "Future History" Stories, by Robert A. Heinlein. Pub. ed. $5.95

618. **Three Novels** by Damon Knight. Rule Golden, The Dying Man & Natural State—all complete. Pub. ed. $3.95

622. **The Foundation Trilogy**, by Isaac Asimov. The ends of the galaxy revert to barbarism. Pub. ed. $10.50

644. **October the First is Too Late**, by Fred Hoyle. Solar beams play havoc with time on earth. Pub. ed. $3.95

607. **Prelude to Mars** by Arthur C. Clarke. "Sands of Mars" & "Prelude to Space"—both complete! Plus 16 short stories. Pub. ed. $4.95

609. **Colossus** by D. F. Jones. Machine conquers man! "Ingenious... alarming." Punch. Pub. ed. $4.95

614. **The Egg Shaped Thing.** C. Hodder-Williams. Engineer finds creature "programmed" to destroy the world. Pub. ed. $4.95.

616. **Twice 22** by Ray Bradbury. Fourty-four stories by the Grand Master of science fiction. Pub. ed. $4.95

628. **From The Twilight Zone** by Rod Serling. 14 spine-tingling stories that breach the gap between science and superstition.

640. **Fantastic Voyage**, by Isaac Asimov. A miniaturized team of doctors invade a man's blood stream. Pub. ed. $3.95

357. **Interrupted Journey** by John G. Fuller. The strange story of an American couple abducted aboard a UFO. Pub. ed. $5.95

SCIENCE FICTION BOOK CLUB
Dept. 92-MSX, Garden City, N.Y. 11530

Please accept my application for membership in the Science Fiction Book Club and rush the 3 books whose numbers I have circled below. Bill me only $1.00, plus shipping and handling, for all 3. Then every month, send me the Club's free bulletin, "Things to Come", which describes coming selections. For each book I accept, I will pay only $1.49, plus shipping and handling, unless I take an extra-value selection at a higher price. I need take only four books within the coming year and may resign at any time thereafter.

NO-RISK GUARANTEE: If not delighted with my introductory package, I may return it in 10 days, pay nothing, owe nothing, and my membership will be canceled.

Circle the numbers of the 3 books you want:

357	616	628
600	614	640
606	616	643
607	622	644
609		

Print
Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

22-S76

If under 18, parent must sign here. (Offer good in U.S.A. only)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Fantasy and Science Fiction

FEBRUARY *Including Venture Science Fiction*

NOVELETS

Attitudes	JAMES H. SCHMITZ	5
Pater One Pater Two	PATRICK MEADOWS	74

SHORT STORIES

Nightwalker	LARRY BRODY	40
Dormant Soul	JOSEPHINE SAXTON	54
Drool	VANCE AANDAHL	70
After All the Dreaming Ends	GARY JENNINGS	116

SPECIAL REPRINT FEATURE

The Cave	YEVGENY ZAMYATIN	29

FEATURES

Books	JUDITH MERRIL, GAHAN WILSON	22
Cartoon	GAHAN WILSON	28
Films: Barbarella	SAMUEL R. DELANY	53
Twin Sisters *(verse)*	DORIS PITKIN BUCK	73
Science: Uncertain, Coy, and Hard To Please	ISAAC ASIMOV	104
F&SF Marketplace		129

Cover by Russell FitzGerald for "Pater One Pater Two"

Joseph W. Ferman, PUBLISHER — *Edward L. Ferman*, EDITOR
Judith Merril, BOOK EDITOR — *Isaac Asimov*, SCIENCE EDITOR
Andrew Porter, ASSISTANT EDITOR — *Dale Beardale*, CIRCULATION MANAGER

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOG CARD NO.: 51-25682

The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, Volume 36, No. 2, Whole No. 213, Feb. 1969. Published monthly by Mercury Press, Inc., at 50¢ a copy. Annual subscription $5.00; $5.50 in Canada and the Pan American Union, $6.00 in all other countries. Publication office, 10 Ferry Street, Concord, N. H. 03301. Editorial and general mail should be sent to 347 East 53rd St., New York, N. Y. 10022. Second Class postage paid at Concord, N. H. Printed in U.S.A.

© 1968 by Mercury Press, Inc. All rights, including translations into other languages, reserved. Submissions must be accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes; the Publisher assumes no responsibility for return of unsolicited manuscripts.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

James H. Schmitz's new story takes place on a giant ship with the most precious cargo imaginable: huge storerooms of artificial bodies along with containers holding half a billion personalities, identities, selves; in short the makings of an entire intelligent species.

ATTITUDES

by James H. Schmitz

IT WAS NOW SIX OF *their* HOURS since the Federation escort ships had signaled that they had completed their assignment and were turning back. Soon, Azard told himself, it would be safe to act . . . to take the final steps in the great gamble which had seemed so dangerous and had been so necessary. Without the Malatlo Attitude, it would have been impossible. Malatlo had helped him in more ways than one.

He stared from the back of the big control compartment at the three Federation humans. They were turned away, intent on various instruments, as the giant cargo carrier made its unhurried approach to the planet. Sashien had said he would begin landing operations in an hour. It would seem unnatural if Azard wasn't with them to observe the process in the screens. Therefore the arrangements he had to make must be made now.

He turned, left the room silently. They mightn't miss him. If they did, it wouldn't matter. He'd established on the voyage out from the Hub that he was constantly preoccupied with the condition and security of the immeasurably precious cargo destiny had placed in his care. As in all other matters, they did nothing to interfere with him in this.

He stepped into a transfer drop and emerged five levels below in a dully gleaming passage studded by many doors. This ship was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

huge, greater than anything he could have imagined was possible before he came to the Hub. A large part of it contained the layered multitudes of artificially grown inert human bodies, each of which presently would be imprinted with a mature eld and thus come to conscious, intelligent life. A gift to lost Malatlo from the Federation of the Hub. Gifts, too, were the endless thousands of tools, machines, instruments, stored in shrink-containers elsewhere on the ship; the supplies and means of immediate colonial life. The Federation was rich and generous. And it had respected, if it did not share generally, the Malatlo Attitude. It respected Azard and his mission . . . the mission to let Malatlo come into renewed existence on the world which now lay ahead.

Azard hurried down the echoing passages to the sealed ship area to which, by agreement, he alone had the means of entry. He hadn't taken it for granted that the agreement would be kept. His responsibilities were far too great to permit himself the weakness of trust. Supposedly the two men and the woman in the control compartment were the only Federation humans on the ship. Yet in this vast vessel one couldn't be certain of it; so, in the section which was his greatest concern, he had set up many concealed traps and warnings. If anyone entered there, he surely must leave some indication for Azard to read. So far there had been no indications.

He opened a massive compartment lock, went through and sealed it behind him. He checked the hidden warning devices meticulously. They had registered no intrusion. He went down another level, opened a second lock.

This one he left open. In the room beyond were the culture cases. Eight of them. Two contained, between them, in the energies flowing through their microscopically honeycombed linings, over half a billion elds—over half a billion personalities, identities, selves. Azard was not trained in the eld sciences, and had been given no information about the forces which maintained and restricted the elds in the cases. But he knew they were there.

He stood, head half turned sideways, eyes partly closed, in an attitude of listening. Nothing detectable, he thought. Nothing that possibly could be detected here while the cases remained shut, by instruments of any kind, or even by sensitivities such as his own. He bent forward, went through the complicated series of manipulations which alone could open a culture case. The thick lid of the one he was handling presently lifted back, revealing the instruments on its underside. Azard didn't touch those. He waited. A

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

moment passed; then, gradually, he grew aware of the confined personalities.

It was like the rising hum of an agitated cloud of tiny swarming creatures. His ears didn't hear it, but his mind did. They were awake, conscious, greedy—terribly greedy, terribly driven to move, sense, live again. He wondered whether Federation humans would be able to hear them as he did, and, if they could, whether they would understand what they heard.

Not long, he told the elds. Not long! But the hum of their urge to regain the trappings of life didn't abate.

He closed the case, then checked the security devices on all eight. There were no signs of attempted tampering. The last six cases did not contain elds but something almost as valuable. The Federation humans didn't know about that. At least, Azard could be nearly certain they didn't know.

He left the sealed ship compartment. It no longer mattered, he told himself, whether or not he had avoided suspicion entirely. The gamble had succeeded this far, was close to complete success. His three ship companions in the control room soon would be dead. Then the ship and everything on it would be in his hands.

He went off to complete his arrangements.

Sashien, the engineer, had brought the ship down on the planet's nightside, to the area suggested by Hub colonization specialists as being one where all conditions favored Malatlo's new beginning. The giant vehicle settled so smoothly that Azard didn't realize the landing had been completed until Sashien began shutting down the engines.

"And now," Odun said presently to Azard, "let's go out and have a firsthand look at your world."

Azard hesitated. He didn't want to be away from the ship, even for a few of their hours, while one of the Federation humans stayed on it. But it turned out then that they were all going . . . Odun, Sashien and the woman Griliom Tantrey who represented the project which had mass-produced and mass-conditioned the stored zombi bodies for Malatlo. A small atmosphere cruiser lifted from the cargo ship's flank. Thirty minutes later they were floating in sunshine.

It was a world of pleasing appearance, verdant and varied, with drifting clouds and rolling oceans. They flew over great animal herds in the plains, skimmed the edges of towering mountains. Finally they turned back into the night.

"What's that?" Azard asked, indicating a great glowing yellow patch on the dark ocean surface below and to their left.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sashien turned the cruiser in that direction.

"A sea creature which eventually should become a valuable source of food and chemicals," said Odun. He'd been involved in the study of the records of this world and its recommendation for the Malatlo revival. "Individually it's tiny. But at various seasons it gathers in masses to spawn".

Sashien checked a reading on the screen, said, "That patch covers more than forty square miles! That's quite a mass!"

They flew across the blanket of living fire on the sea surface. Azard said, "This is a rich planet. The Federation is being very generous. . . ."

"Not too generous, really," said Odun. "This is a world which was surveyed and earmarked for possible settlement a long while ago. But it's so very far from the Hub that it's quite possible it never would have been put to any use. There's no shortage of habitable planets much closer to us." He added, "Its remoteness from the Federation and from any civilization of which we know is, of course, one of the reasons this world was chosen for Malatlo."

"It is still an act of great generosity," said Azard.

"Well, you see," Odun explained, "there are many more of us in the Federation than Malatlo believed who cared for it and its ideals."

Griliom Tantrey nodded. "We loved Malatlo," she said. "That's why we three are here. . . ."

Malatlo. The Malatlo Attitude.

Turn back something like two centuries from the night the giant cargo carrier came down to an untouched world.

The Federation of the Hub had been forged at last. It was forged in blood and fire and fury, but that was over now. For the first time in many human generations no Cluster Wars were being fought. And a great many people everywhere had begun to look back with shock and something like growing incredulity on the destruction and violence and cruelties of the immediate past. They wanted no more of that. None whatever.

But, of course, the forming of the Federation did not end violence and cruelties. It did establish a working society and one with a good deal of promise in it, but it was not a perfect society and probably never would be perfect. And when these people realized they couldn't change that, they simply wanted no more to do with the Federation either.

That was Malatlo, the Malatlo Attitude. No one seemed able to say how the term originated. On a thousand worlds it was somehow in the air. There were no great leaders of this movement or cult or philosophy, whatever one

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wanted to call it. But there were very many minor leaders.

They put it to the Federation. They wanted to be away from the Federation, these people who shared the Malatlo Attitude, away from all people who did not fully share it; they wanted to be by themselves. They had no dislike for other human beings, but they did not want to have Malatlo disturbed by those whose thinking and actions weren't in accord with it.

The Federation accepted the demand. Perhaps the men in authority looked on it as an experiment. Possibly they approved individually of the Malatlo Attitude but considered it impractical for most human beings—certainly impractical for the Federation. At any rate, they did everything needed to bring the world of Malatlo into being.

The location of the world was never made public. But it was known that it lay at an immense distance from the Hub, beyond any probability of chance discovery. It had a neighbor planet on which lived a race of beings who called themselves Raceels and called their world Tiurs. They had a well-developed civilization but had not yet discovered space flight. The followers of the Malatlo Attitude had wanted such neighbors to demonstrate that man could live in peace with all other creatures. Some eighty million of them were transferred to the world Malatlo within the time of a few years. Thereafter almost all ties with the Federation were dissolved. The people of Malatlo were opposed to galactic travel and retained only spacecraft designed to let them move about the system of their new sun.

By agreement, one connection with the Federation was retained. Once every ten years a small ship traveled from the Hub to the Malatlo system. It had few people on board, and all of them were sufficiently sympathetic to the Malatlo Attitude to create no discord. Even so they remained on the planet only long enough to gather the information wanted by the Federation, and then returned to report.

The reports remained favorable. In something less than two centuries, Malatlo's population increased to two hundred million and stabilized at that level. They had developed new branches of science dealing with the human psyche but were unwilling to reveal their findings in that area to outsiders. They established increasingly friendly contacts with the Raceels of Tiurs, who looked with favor on the Malatlo Attitude. That had been the last report.

And then Azard arrived in the Federation in a small battered ship which had taken more than three years to make the voyage from the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Malatlo System. The world of Malatlo had been destroyed. The Raceels of Tiurs had struck against it with matter conversion fields which within days made the planet uninhabitable, then consumed it completely. With the exception of Azard, the followers of the Malatlo Attitude no longer existed in the flesh. But the elds, the personalities, of over half of them had been preserved, in the eight cases Azard brought with him. The isolation of the eld, the ability to maintain it in independence of a physical body, had been the last of Malatlo's great discoveries.

Azard reported that Tiurs had destroyed itself in the process. Evidently at least one conversion field had gone out of control on the planet, and once a field became active, there was no way to check it. Whatever had been the cause, it was apparent that before the one ship which escaped from Malatlo left the system, the Raceel world also was undergoing rapid disintegration.

Azard came with the plea that the Federation should once more help Malatlo become established. Federation science knew how to construct human bodies which were physically functional but lacked self-awareness, lacked a developed personality. The elds of Malatlo could be transferred to such bodies and resume physical existence.

The Federation agreed. Zombi bodies were primarily research tools; there had been no previous occasion to produce them in large quantities. But given sufficient supervisory personnel, their mass production involved no significant problems, and forced growth processes could bring armies of them to the point of physical maturity in months. Concurrent mechanical exercise and programmed neuron stimulation completed the process. The result was a limited but viable human facsimile. If the discoveries of Malatlo's experimenters could turn the facsimile into a complete new human being, they were welcome to the material.

So the construction of the bodies began. Meanwhile a world was selected which would meet the requirements of the Malatlo Attitude, and presently the zombis and the basic tools of a simple civilization were stored away on the great cargo ship. Azard brought his precious cases aboard. The Federation had selected Sashien, Odun and Griliom as the three specialists who would ferry the ship to the planet, supervise the automatic unloading and construction equipment, and check the final conditioning of the zombis, before returning with the ship to the Hub.

From Azard's point of view, the thing basically wrong with this schedule was that a considerable

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

number of people were aware of the new world's location. It made it inevitable that someone presently would come out to see how things fared with Malatlo. And that was not an acceptable situation.

Naturally he'd made no mention of this. But the cargo ship would neither return to the Hub after disgorging its contents, nor would it remain on this world. Azard planned to destroy his Federation aides within hours after the landing, then equip as many selected elds as would be required to handle the ship with their new bodies, and lift the ship back into space to search for another planet so far from the Federation that they could be sure it never would be found.

As soon as the atmosphere cruiser returned from the survey tour of the planet, he took steps to execute the plan.

He was somewhat afraid of the three specialists. They would not have been chosen for this mission if they hadn't been very competent people. During the trip he'd avoided their company as much as possible, for which they showed no offense. But he'd still had enough contact with them to know that they were alert and quick thinking. It was unlikely that anything would go wrong. But it was possible. His first move, therefore, was to make the ship transmitters inoperative. It was quickly done, and with that, they were temporarily cut off from any chance of summoning help. No doubt it wouldn't take them long to trace down and repair the damage, if they discovered it in time, but before that happened, Azard's maneuvers would engulf them in one way or another.

His immediate preparations for their death were complete. The control compartment was one place on the ship where they regularly could be found together. Another was an adjoining three-room area where they took their meals, worked on their records, sometimes relaxed with music and tapes. From various points on the ship, he could now release an odorless vapor which killed on contact into either of these sections, but it was necessary to do this at a time when the three of them would be destroyed simultaneously.

They were in the control compartment, engaged in calculations connected with the disembarking of the heavy automatic construction equipment, when Azard went down once more to the ship's sealed section. When he emerged from it, he was carrying one of the eld cases. A few minutes later, he locked himself into a storage area where thirty zombi bodies lay in individual full-stimulation containers.

He'd been instructed thoroughly by Griliom Tantrey and others

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in the methods required to bring these bodies out of the stage of almost totally quiescent metabolism used to store them and to the functional level normal for an active human body. These thirty had been approaching that level for the past shipday, and the instruments on the containers told Azard that they now had reached it. All that remained to be done was to give them consciousness—and the elds could handle that.

He opened the case and slowly and carefully began to adjust its settings. Most of the vast swarm of personalities in there could not be isolated or handled individually. But the members of certain key groups could be contacted individually by the combined use of a number of dials and released one by one, and that was all that was required. Azard set the case down before one of the opened zombi containers; directed the release needle at the inert body within and set an eld free. He sensed it hurtle forward and take possession. The others knew at once what was happening. He felt their body-greed surge up like a roaring pressure against his mind. Not yet, he thought.

But thirty in all he set free. They were disciplined entities. The zombi bodies remained still, unstirring, except for their deep regular breathing. Azard turned on a device, and his voice began to speak from it. As he left the section, it was telling the thirty elds, listening now through the bodies' senses, what they must do . . .

And, elsewhere in the ship, Azard was switching on a small viewscreen. It showed him first the control compartment—empty now. He turned to a view of one of the living-area rooms. Griliom Tantrey was just coming in through a door, and Sashien turned from a table to speak to her. Their voices became audible, and Azard listened a moment to what they were saying. Then Sashien called off to Odun, and Odun came through the door.

Azard smiled briefly, reached back of the screen, uncovered a stud set flush into its surface, pressed the stud down and held it. The gas which drifted into the room towards the three Federation specialists was colorless, soundless, odorless. It touched them in seconds, and one after the other, they collapsed. Azard released the stud. They were already dead . . . and within an hour, the ship's ventilation system would have filtered the poisonous vapor out of the living area again and disposed of it.

And now his duties were nearly concluded! With a sense of vast relief and triumph, he told himself the moment had come when he could turn all responsibility back to others greater than him-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

self. Almost running in his eagerness, he returned through the ship to the sealed section. This time he didn't bother to close its locks behind him; there was no need.

There were over two thousand widely varying genetic patterns represented in the zombi bodies provided by the Federation. One of them was truly outstanding, both in physical development and mental potential. Azard had brought a specimen of this group here the preceding day and activated the awakening mechanisms of its container. It was to receive the eld of the greatest of all those who had been in his charge so long. He now examined the zombi and its condition for the final time with great care. But it was clearly an excellent choice, the best he could have made in the circumstances. . . .

As he was setting the last of the transfer dials, there was a touch of odd weakness, a heaviness. A feeling then as if, in an instant, all his strength had been drained from him.

With immeasurable effort, in total dismay and incredulity, he forced himself to turn his head.

And there they stood. Sashien and the woman Griliom—

The third?

The insane realization came that the third figure was himself.

"No," the figure said, "this isn't you, Azard. We've concocted a disguise which will lend me your physical appearance for a while." The voice was Odun's.

Staring, unable to do more than stare, Azard watched Sashien hand a device which had been pointed at him to Griliom. The two men approached, picked him up from the floor and set him in a chair.

Griliom told him, "I'm reducing the pressure. You'll be able to speak."

Azard drew a deep breath. Some hope flowed back into him. The elds he had provided with bodies and information should soon be arming themselves and coming here. He'd warned them to be cautious. If these three wanted him to talk, he would talk. He said hoarsely, "What do you want?"

Odun said, "Why did you try to kill us?"

"I didn't," Azard said. How could they possibly have escaped? "You should have been unconscious for a time but unhurt."

They stared at him a moment. Sashien said, "What was your purpose in making the attempt?"

Azard sighed. "I needed this ship for Malatlo."

"Malatlo could have had the ship for the asking," said Odun. "You knew that."

"Yes. But we can't stay here. This world is still too close to the Federation, and too many people would know Malatlo was here. We owe renewed gratitude to the Fed-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

eration. But now we must break all ties with its people. The new Malatlo must be born on a world no one knows about—and too far away to be discovered accidentally."

"Malatlo," said Griliom, "did not object to maintaining limited contacts with the Federation before this."

"Many did object to it," Azard assured her. "And at the end many believed that our trouble arose because the Raceels of Tiurs had learned through us about the Federation. They tried to exterminate us not because they were afraid of us but because they were afraid of the Federation where the Malatlo Attitude didn't prevail."

"You still needed the Federation to supply you with zombi bodies," Griliom remarked. "The number we were able to store on this ship were no more than a beginning."

"But they were sufficient," said Azard. "Naturally our best scientists would have been among those awakened first. Their study of the bodies and of what I recorded of the techniques involved in developing them would allow them to duplicate the process."

He went on earnestly. "You must believe that no harm would have come to you. You would have been left here on the planet with the atmosphere cruiser and supplies. As soon as the cargo carrier was far enough away so that it could no longer be traced, we would have transmitted word to the escort ships to return and pick you up."

Sashien and Odun looked at Griliom. She shook her head. "Analysis showed three lethal components in the gas he released," she said. She glanced at Azard. "We weren't in that room. What you saw and heard were programmed zombis. They died in moments—as we would have done in their place." She added to the other two, "So we have here an alleged Malatlo Follower who was willing to kill three human beings to attain his ends. That seems difficult to believe."

Azard said doggedly, "The fact that I am a Malatlo Follower must indicate to you that if the gas I used was in fact deadly, it could only have been a mistake! A mistake which, I must admit, might have had terrible consequences. . . ."

Odun said thoughtfully, "Perhaps we should question one of the others." He nodded at the case standing before the body container. "I'll take the paralyzer, Griliom. Will you see how far along he was with that."

Azard slowly tensed his muscles as the woman went to the eld case, stooped above it to inspect the pattern of dials inside. There was no hesitancy in her manner—did she understand what she saw?

She said, "He's selected a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

specific psyche for transfer to the body. Let me see . . ." She turned to the container, opened it, bent over the zombi. Her shoulders moved. Azard couldn't see what she was doing, but he could assume she was checking its condition on the various instruments. She straightened again presently, looked at Odun. "Total capacity," she said. "We can effect the transfer."

Azard made a straining effort to arise. But they were watchful; the paralyzer's pressure increased instantly—he could not move, and now he discovered he had also become unable to speak. A wave of dizziness passed through him, his vision blurred. He became aware next that Griliom and Sashien were moving about him; then clear sight gradually returned.

He found himself still immobilized in the chair, looking out into the room through something like a thin veil of darkness. He guessed it was an energy field of some kind. Odun stood in the center of the room. Some twenty feet from him the zombi body Azard had prepared lay on its back on the floor. Azard realized then that Sashien and Griliom stood on either side of his chair, a little behind him.

The body stirred, opened its eyes, sat up.

It looked about the room but seemed unable to see Azard and the two on his right and left. The energy veil evidently blocked vision from that side. Its gaze fastened on Odun, who stood watching it with the face of Azard. It came to its feet.

There had been no uncertainty in any of its motions. This was a powerful eld, instantly capable of impressing its intentions on the full range of the zombi's physical and mental response patterns. Azard should have been able to sense its presence in the room, but he could force no eld contact through the energy barrier. There was no way to transmit a warning.

"Dom belke anda grom, Azard!" the body addressed Odun. It was a strong, self-assured voice.

"Gelan ra Azard," Odun said. "Ra diriog Federation. 'Sellen ra Raceel."

The body moved instantly. It sprang sideways to a table standing ten feet away. And Azard saw only now what it must have noted in its sweeping glance about the room—the gun which lay on the table. The body snatched it up, pointed the muzzle at Odun, pulled the trigger.

And dropped limply back to the floor, the gun spinning from its hand.

"This was a test," Odun told Azard. He no longer wore Azard's face; the false skin or whatever it was had been removed. "You heard what I said to him. I identified myself as a human of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Federation and told him he was a Raceel. He immediately attempted to destroy me. The weapon, of course, was rigged. If the trigger was pressed, it would kill the user."

Azard did not reply.

"So you are Raceels," Odun went on. "And you'd kill any of us—any human being—as readily as you destroyed the people of Malatlo. We should like to know how this came about. Are you willing to talk?"

"Yes. I'll tell you whatever you want to know." Azard made his voice dull, his expression listless and resigned. But there was savage anger in him—and the longer he held these three in talk, the more certain their death and eventual Raceel victory became. The thirty elds he'd released had been a select group of superb fighters, and they must be searching the ship by now, in strong new bodies and with weapons in their hands. The demonstration here confirmed that they'd know very quickly how to put those bodies to full use.

"We were desperate," he said, and went on, knowing the statement had gained him their full attention. Before the Malatlo settlers contacted it, Tiurs had faced the problem of a population constantly on the verge of expanding beyond the ability of the planet to support it and no adequate techniques of space travel which might have helped alleviate the problem. A temporary and unsatisfactory solution had been the development of methods of preserving a conscious personality indefinitely without the support of a physical body. . . .

"So it was you and not Malatlo," said Sashien, "who originated the eld sciences."

"They were investigating the subject," Azard told him. "But we accomplished the eld separation a century before they began to make significant progress in that direction—"

The Malatlo Followers did not push their contacts with Tiurs, believing it best to let the relationship develop gradually and in a manner which would be satisfactory to the Raceels. And the Raceels, though hungry for the information they might get from the humans, remained equally cautious. For them the situation held both great promise and a great threat. There were means of practical interstellar space travel, and there were worlds upon worlds among the stars to which their kind might spread. That was the promise.

The threat was the prospect of encountering competitors in space more formidable than themselves. The Followers were harmless, but from what they had told the Raceels of the species to which they belonged, the species certainly was not. Evidently it already controlled an enormous sector of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

space. Further, there might be other species equally dangerous to those weaker than they.

The logical approach was to remain unnoticed until one became strong enough to meet any opposition.

The Raceels immersed themselves in research on many levels, including lines long since abandoned as being too immediately dangerous to themselves. Somewhat to their surprise, they found Malatlo completely willing to supply them with spaceships for study when they indicated an interest in them. Unfortunately, these craft were not designed to accomplish interstellar flights, but they advanced the scientists of Tiurs a long step in that direction. The Raceels kept this as well as their other hopes and fears a careful secret from Malatlo.

They were a race which had a naturally high rate of reproduction and which throughout a war-studded history had made a fetish of the expansion of its kind. That drive became a liability when Tiurs was united at last into a single rigidly controlled society confined to the surface of its planet. Now suddenly it might be turned into an asset again. When they burst upon the stars, it would be in no timid and tentative colonial probes, but in many thousands of ships, each capable of peopling a world in a single generation.

They worked towards that end with feverish determination. From Malatlo they learned of the eldless zombi bodies Federation science knew how to produce in theoretically limitless quantities, and they took up that line of investigation. The disembodied elds in the storage vaults, for whom there had been no room for normal existence on Tiurs, would come to life again in new bodies on new worlds. Dormant fertile germ cells of selected strains were stockpiled by the millions. Weaponry research moved quickly forwards. The full interstellar drive seemed almost within reach.

And then—

"Malatlo Followers informed us they had become aware of our plans and were horrified by them," Azard said. "Apparently they believed they could persuade us to abandon them." He hesitated. "So we silenced them."

"You extinguished a living world," said Griliom.

Azard said, "We couldn't stop what we were doing. And Malatlo would reveal what it had learned to the Federation. We believed we had no choice."

"How was Tiurs destroyed?" Sashien asked.

"We had intended to destroy it with mass-converter fields after we left," said Azard. "To later investigators it would appear that Malatlo and Tiurs had been engulfed by the same unexplained

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

disaster. We didn't realize then how dangerously unstable the fields were. There was a premature reaction among the ones being positioned on Tiurs. After that—"

He shrugged. For a moment a three-year old horror seemed to darken his mind again.

"We were totally unprepared, and we had only days left to act," he continued. Up to the last moment, the most valuable sections of the population were moved through eld separation centers. Only one ship equipped with an experimental interstellar drive had escaped the initial conversion burst. It was very small. But it could carry as many Raceel elds as there would be time to salvage. It could carry a relatively huge quantity of stored fertile germ cells. And supplies for one Raceel during a trip that must take years. Because there was now only one place where zombi bodies for the salvaged elds could be produced, and that place was the human Federation of the Hub. . . .

Griliom remarked, "The body you use has been analyzed. It obviously is a human one. How did you obtain it?"

"There were a number of Followers on Tiurs when we destroyed Malatlo," Azard said. "I was one of a group who had the various qualifications required to take our survival ship to the Federation. My eld was transferred to the body of a Follower for the purpose. The method employed was to bring the human subject to the point of physical death. The death process dissolved the inhabiting eld. The Raceel eld was then injected and an attempt made to revive the body. The first forty-eight such attempts failed, and the Raceel elds involved also died before they could be detached again from the dying bodies which had absorbed them. I was the forty-ninth transfer. That body was successfully revived, and so I lived."

He added, "There is much valuable information we could exchange if, for example, the Raceel scientists in charge of the eld transfer methods and the ones who developed the mass-converter fields were restored to physical existence. We offer you what they have learned in return for the use of your zombi bodies."

He didn't expect them to respond to the offer. They must believe that if they wanted such information they could get it from the elds who were now in effect their prisoners, without giving anything in return. But if they continued to let him talk, the released elds would have more time to find them here and destroy them.

He added again, "You must not judge us too harshly. Our history and traditions made the continued expansion of our species a matter of driving necessity to us. Nothing

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

could be allowed to block it. But your species and mine can now be of value to each other. You should consider that rather than the question of avenging Malatlo."

"Azard," Odun said, "you don't fully understand the situation. The story you told in the Federation was tentatively accepted, but you were under close observation. And certain incongruities gradually became evident. Even allowing for the shock of the disaster, you didn't speak and act quite as a Malatlo Follower might be expected to speak and act. Your demands were logical, in the light of the Malatlo Attitude. But they were a trifle too precisely logical and uncompromising.

"Then there is the matter of your mind. It presents automatic blocks to psychic probes. Human minds can demonstrate that ability in various forms. In your case, however, it is brought into action in a manner no human mind of record has employed to date. So there presently was the question of whether you were in fact, in spite of physical appearances, wholly human. Meanwhile it had been confirmed that, as you reported, the worlds of Malatlo and Tiurs had disappeared. If you weren't human then, it followed that you were in all probability a Raceel eld in a human body . . . and that you were trying to trick the Federation into helping you reestablish the Raceel species."

Azard stared at him. "If that was suspected, why—"

"It was a test."

"A test?" Azard repeated.

Odun sighed. "Even at second hand," he remarked, "the Malatlo Attitude seems to retain a curious power. It was decided that if some indication could be found that the destruction of Malatlo was an act of thoughtless panic, an act which you and your kind regretted not only because of the destruction it brought in turn on yourselves, we would then help bring the stored Raceel elds into physical existence. But everything you've done since this voyage began was continuing evidence of the implacable hostility your species entertains towards all others. And you've been kept under constant observation."

Azard said harshly, "That would have been impossible!"

"We employed certain safeguards, of course," Griliom Tantrey told him. She nodded at the zombi body on the floor. "I gave that body a final stimulant before we transferred the eld of what was presumably one of your people's leaders to it. This was a step in the animation of zombis of which you had not been informed. The bodies to which you transferred elds an hour ago lacked that stimulant. They all died therefore within minutes after the elds brought them into full normal activity, and the elds, of course, died with them."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He tried for some seconds to make himself disbelieve her, but it was clear that she spoke the truth. He looked at their faces, addressed Odun. "You used our language. How did you learn it?"

"I've made a study of the Malatlo-Raceel relationship for some years," Odun said. "The last ship to return from the system provided me with language tapes." He looked at his companions. "I believe Azard has told us as much as we need or wish to know."

They nodded.

"Then," Odun resumed, "it's time to take the final steps in this."

His hand moved. And darkness closed in with a rush around Azard.

He came awake again presently and looked about in dimness. He was seated in another chair, again unable to move his limbs or body, and the three were busy with something not far from him.

After some seconds he realized they were in the atmosphere cruiser. The screen showed the surface of one of the planetary oceans. The two eld cases stood near it.

Azard discovered he could speak and asked aloud, "What are you doing?"

They looked around. Griliom said matter-of-factly, "We'll dispose of the elds here."

In spite of everything, Azard felt a shock of incredulous rage. But at least, he thought, these three would also die! Released simultaneously, the eld hordes would struggle furiously for possession of their bodies as well as his own. And neither the inhabiting elds nor the physical bodies could survive such an onslaught.

He said, "You have no authority to make such a decision!"

"We do have that authority, Azard," said Odun. "That's why we're here."

"Then," Azard told him, "you're worse than we ever were. We destroyed only the population of a world. You're taking it on yourselves to destroy an intelligent species."

They didn't respond immediately. They were watching the screen now, and Azard was able to shift his head far enough to watch it too. After a moment the rim of a glowing yellow formation came drifting into the screen. He realized it was a spawning swarm of billions of tiny sea creatures such as the one they'd seen earlier that night.

Griliom said without looking around at him, "Down there is an endless supply of bodies which have neither elds nor intelligence. I've set the controls on these cases so that the Raceel elds will be released within a minute after the cases strike the surface of the water. They'll emerge and enter host bodies in which they can live for something less than a standard

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

year—the life span of these creatures. And then they'll die with them. That's the way we're settling this."

Odun added, "But you're mistaken in one basic respect, Azard. We're preserving the stored Raceel ova, and a new generation will be raised from them under our supervision. Only some terrible necessity would force us to destroy a species. So your species will not die. Its history, its traditions and its attitudes will die."

Azard asked, "And what are we if not our history, our traditions, and our attitudes?"

The humans didn't reply, and he wasn't certain then whether he'd asked the question aloud. He discovered he was indifferent about the matter, and that the question itself had been an indifferent one. Then he noticed that the cruiser had moved close to the surface of the sea, and that someone was opening a hatch. The eld cases were dropped out, and the hatch closed again.

It occurred to Azard that he had no emotional feeling about this or about anything else. By their skills, they'd drained his emotions from him. He realized next that his senses were dimming and that he was dying. But he remained indifferent to that, too. He decided that in their way they were merciful.

Then he died.

Down below, the open eld cases bobbed in the glowing water. The elds, conscious and terribly hungry for physical existence, discovered abruptly that they had been released. They flashed out of the cases and found life in abundance about them. They entered, took possession, affixed themselves. Perhaps for an instant some of them retained awareness enough to understand they had become joined to a form of life which provided no vehicle for consciousness. But then, with nothing to give it support, their own consciousness drained away.

However, they would live on for a while. For something less than a standard year.

Get your Asimovs while they last

We still have some copies of F&SF's Special Isaac Asimov issue (October 1966). The issue includes THE KEY, an sf novelet by Isaac Asimov, a profile of the Good Doctor by L. Sprague de Camp, Dr. Asimov's own question-and-answer reminiscences of his beginnings as a writer, a bibliography, and a special cover by Emsh. There are not many of these collector's items left, so rush $1.00 to Mercury Press, 347 East 53 Street, New York, N. Y. 10022.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS

IS IT NINETY PERCENT OR ninety-five? I ought to look it up, in fact, I ought to know it by now: but at the moment I cannot even recall with certainty where it is that I keep seeing the figure —the *Analog* editorials, I think. Well, ninety or ninety-five: in any case a staggeringly large percentage of all the scientists who have ever lived on Earth are—I am told, repeatedly—alive at this moment.

Through, one assumes, a similar and equally imperative historical dynamic, a comparable proportion of all future concepts ever generated in science fiction (plus, to be fair, a few new ones —well, at least a few urbanely renewed variants) are contained in the combined 400,000-or-so words of four new books.

One hesitates to use the word *novel* to describe both John Brunner's quarter-million-word globovistar macroscopic, STAND ON ZANZIBAR (507 large-size small-type pages from Doubleday at $6.95), and Bob Shaw's tidy little THE TWO TIMERS, containing barely (if any) more than ten percent of the combined word-total of all four books (191 plenty-of-white-space pages, an Ace Special, 60¢). Shaw confines himself modestly to five main characters and four main sets for a psychological thriller set a scant twenty years or so in a future with virtually no sociological changes and an apparently much reduced rate of technological innovation—aside from what might fairly be called mixed-media time travel. Brunner spreads literally dozens of detailed characters over as many meticulously constructed settings in his teeming and frenetic world of 2010—utilizing the basic techniques of Dos Passos' USA trilogy for sequential closeups and long-shots on the mores, morals, and minutiae of politics, industry, education, entertainment, drug habits, dress fashions, computers, commercials, sex, slang, and all the etceteras of Greater New York and Ellay in North America, The Republic of Beninia in Africa, the Guided Socialist Democracy of Yatakang in the Pacific, and all points between.

The other two novels are from Clifford Simak and Roger Zelazny. Zelazny's ISLE OF THE DEAD

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(another Ace Special, 60¢) is one page shorter and maybe 5000 words longer than THE TWO-TIMERS with as many planets as Shaw had locales, and at *least* four times as many characters (of whom about one-fourth are less than ornately bizarre), in a 32nd Century adventure tale about a galactically wealthy, system-hopping hero—a worldscaping planetary architect-contractor and (also by profession) not-quite-immortal god. Both ISLE and Simak's THE GOBLIN RESERVATION (Doubleday, $4.95) belong to that special and, recently, all too rare sub-category first clearly delineated in *Unknown* (of blessed memory) which gave rise to the need for the term, *science-fantasy*: the genre of supernatural science, of the technology of magic, matter-of-fact fantasy, the territory just this side of weird-gothic-horror, fantastic whimsy, and sword-and-sorcery. But the two books, inevitably, are as far apart in style, theme, and concept as the genre permits.

Simak, predictably, stays with the traditional category-novel length: 55-60 thousand words (192 standard pages); he also maintains a median time-distance (26th century) and a familiar setting (the wooded countryside of the northmidwest): there ends the expected. The Goblin Reservation is a forest preserve for all varieties of Little People: trolls, fairies, leprechauns, et al., as well as goblins. It is administered by the College of Supernatural Phenomena, located next door to Time College (and its adjunctive Time Museum) on the Wisconsin Campus of Planetary University. The cast of characters includes, besides Little People, a ghost (named Ghost), a banshee, a biomech (Sylvester), Alley Oop (a Neanderthaler), one dragon, William Shakespeare, a generous handful of imaginatively (even for Simak) constructed extraterrestrials (only two types with more than walk-on parts), and roughly a dozen straight humans (assorted academics, one artist, one cop, one conman, one each professional waiter and hostess).

Do not be misled. THE GOBLIN RESERVATION is neither Disneyland whimsy nor latter-day Robert Nathan—any more than the twisted dwarf, cruel lady, knife artist, and psychopathic killer of Zelazny's melodrama (not to mention Shimbo of Darktree Tower, Shrugger of Thunders—the deific alter ego of megamillionaire Francis Sandow—or the central image of Sandow's favorite creation, the gloom-shrouded Isle of the Dead itself) are really either Grand Guignol or H. P. Lovecraft. Beneath the (separate, indeed opposed, but equally) simplistic surface of each book (slaphappy stereotype symbols and sweetness-and-light in the Simak; a sort

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of Playboy-Philosophy sophomore sadism, cynicism, and calculated shallowness in the Zelazny), the comic-book images resonate at surprising depths. The greatest fault of both books, in fact, is (startlingly, for *both* authors) in the story-telling. But never mind—the images are bright, and they last well; the symbols ring true. One feels Zelazny has at last emerged from his long spell of preoccupation with veneers—that Simak is approaching a new level of meaning as significant as that he found with his first Webster Family stories. Both stylistically and story-wise, these two books are inferior to much of what each author has done before. The fact remains that I could not put either one down till it was done.

I cannot say the same for either Shaw or Brunner, although—again—for different reasons in each case.

THE TWO-TIMERS is a beautifully *fitted* piece of work: where Simak and Zelazny both sacrificed emotional conviction to imagic effectiveness, working at conventional lengths too short to allow for both—and where Brunner's detailed visualizations rather outgrew his basic vision—Shaw's novella is paced and laid out (almost *staged*) precisely to fit its dimensions—which are small. Unlike last year's bombshell "Light of Other Days," the book offers nothing new in its time-travel theories or techniques, nor does it provide the sort of thrill of insight that lifted the prize-winning short story completely out of the class of other clever *Analog* technogimmick stories.

TWO-TIMERS is an admirably competent sci-fi thriller. STAND ON ZANZIBAR is something, very, else.

In a sense, Brunner has written the first true science fiction novel. That is, he has taken a true novel plot, developed it in proper novelistic style, and at the same time extrapolated fully, in accordance with all the basic science fiction rules, a future environment whose initial assumptions provide not only the background for the story, but an essential component of its central conflicts. The "classic" science fiction novels of the past have ordinarily achieved their fame by doing (either) one of these jobs *so* successfully that any simply passable performance of the other was acceptable.

I still remember the *world* of Heinlein's UNIVERSE, for instance, vividly; but the individuals in it—except for the physical attributes of the two-headed hero—are gone beyond recall. The members of the Gestalt group in Sturgeon's MORE THAN HUMAN are impressed in my memory as indelibly as children I have known and loved myself; so is the "personality" of the Gestalt itself; I

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cannot remember at all what rationale was provided for its existence.

A third type, of course, is represented by Miller's A CANTICLE FOR LIEBOWITZ, which provided discontinuous "close-ups" in the form of a series of shorter stories containing the necessary balance of intellectual and emotional content, leaving the reader to fill in the parts between for himself. This approach has been, till now, the closest to the "true science fiction novel": or, on second thought, there was an earlier example—Frank Herbert's DUNE, which I (alone, I believe) found flawed in logic and consistency, as well as pretentious and dull. It did, however, fulfill in theory, if not (for me) in effect, the job Brunner has now, to my mind, done for the first time with minimal—but *at least* minimal—success.

It is a success which raises some questions about the worthiness of the endeavor, however. Within his established premises, Brunner conducts himself brilliantly: I do not complain this time of any internal inconsistencies; but the more detailed and believable his world of 2010 became, the less believable (while equally detailed) seemed the behavior of his characters. Question: is it *possible* for a writer in one culture fully and adequately to project the mores and emotional responses of realistic human beings in a (realistically) different environment?

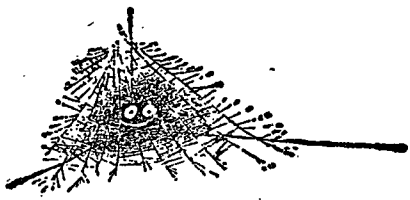
Next question: is it possible to spread out this *much* detail about a world conceived in the author's mind (and—inevitably—dedicated to the proposition that his own logic is supreme) *without* getting to sound a bit pompous and pretentious?

I am not answering these questions, but asking them. I expect the answers will come from the other ambitious efforts that will assuredly follow now. It will be interesting, finding out.

Meantime, one can explore the book itself. I make no attempt to describe or summarize here, because any brief picture would be misleading. Read it straight through, or dip and skim: there's *something* for everyone, and an impressive amount overall. (The book is so full of a number of—fascinating—things that it doesn't really *matter* whether they add up to that increasingly ambiguous term, A Good Novel.)

—JUDITH MERRIL

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



THE DARK CORNER

The ads in the *Weird Tales* of the Forties offered us creepy readers all kinds of boons: relief from the agonies of hernia by means of patented trusses, big money in radio, two-tone jackets of surpassing ugliness, muscles by Charles Atlas; even previously hidden cosmic truths (THIS WISDOM MUST DIE) could be ours for a filled-out coupon and a pittance. We were a pretty lucky bunch.

Sometimes, though, it was only promises, promises.

Arkham House began talking about the imminent release of H. P. Lovecraft's SELECTED LETTERS, I do believe, when they were advertising his OUTSIDER AND OTHERS as a brand new book. They were still dropping hints when they brought out his BEYOND THE WALL OF SLEEP. By January of 1948 they even gave the price of the thing ($6.50), but an obvious note of hysteria had crept into their copy. The LETTERS would appear, they said ("our printers promise"), "as soon as possible."

Well, in 1965, by golly, SELECTED LETTERS 1911-1924 (Arkham House, $7.50) finally showed up, and now, in 1968, SELECTED LETTERS 1925-1929 is among us. To those interested, it has been worth the wait.

The first volume was reviewed in this magazine by Fritz Leiber (May '66). Mr. Leiber stressed the point that the LETTERS were, more than anything else, the touching record of a very sick, but very brave man trying to claw his way through a bog of neurosis to something approaching mental health. In the same issue of the magazine there was an excellent essay by J. Vernon Shea on Lovecraft which, among other things, detailed the appalling upbringing poor H. P. L. suffered. A brute of a mother stuffed with warped ideas, a weakling father who eventually went insane—it was the sort of childhood that would have done in a lesser man's ego altogether, and Lovecraft's did not escape severe damage.

The LETTERS 1925-1929 cover a period in Lovecraft's life devoted to frantic retreat and desperate reorganization. His marriage had not worked, his attempt to storm New York had degenerated into a fiasco, and, as if this were not enough, the Jazz Age was in full flower, T. S. Eliot, and all.

Lovecraft fled. He returned to his native Providence and tried to resume the life he'd known before his disastrous forays into the out-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

side world. He scrabbled for roots in genealogy. He rhapsodized on his dream of Georgian days. He buttressed up his pose as an elderly gentleman who could, if pressed, think back to 1700 and beyond. In all sorts of clever and ingenious ways he attempted to become a drop-out from the garish here and now.

It's encouraging to see how badly he failed. Despite their antique affectations (a typical closing: Yr. most oblig'd & obt. Servt.) the letters are, of course, obviously products of their time. There is Robert Benchley, Don Marquis, Damon Runyon, and even Walter Winchell in his humor. His cool cockiness against a background of dismayed nihilism has a recognizably John Barrymorian swagger to it. His politics smack much more of Coolidge and Hoover than they do of a Tory Colonial.

He failed, too, thank heavens, in his role as a creature, probably made of silicon, who floated in outer space near Betelguese and viewed this Earth, and the flesh and blood which crawled upon it, with chill, impartial logic. Deny it as he may, and he does protest so much, it is painfully obvious that H.P.L. was a vulnerable and anxious heart, desperately in need of companionship, fearful of rejection, and otherwise human.

This same humanity also succeeded in crumbling away his really formidable array of prejudices, at least partially. It might even, had he lived long enough, driven him to a liberal position, though I'm sure he would have fought it tooth and claw.

If you are familiar with the members of the little group that made up his circle, and with his writings, so much the better, but it really doesn't matter if you aren't. The LETTERS stand very well by themselves as excellent entertainment. They are a charming blend of gossip, outrageous snobbery, kindly help, fascinating intellectual gymnastics, obscure erudition, and much fantastick (to use the official spelling) play. And they are about as close as you can get, these days, to meeting what must have been a remarkably lovable man.

Even if you don't believe in ghosts, even if you're not afraid of them even though you don't believe in them, GHOSTS IN IRISH HOUSES by James Reynolds (Paperback Library, 75¢) should please you, unless you're a terrible stuffed shirt on the subject. It's a darling collection of haunts ranging all the way from shy, strangled children to a whopper of a saga about the Dreaded Women of Moher who fly ragged in the storm chasing salmons by the thousands to the shore before them.

—GAHAN WILSON

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"In here."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Special reprint feature: THE CAVE

by Yevgeny Zamyatin

Introduction by SAM MOSKOWITZ

The 1966 jailing by the Russian government of Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel (writing under the pen names of Abram Tertz and Nikolai Arzhak respectively) for permitting works to be published abroad that might be detrimental to the Communist cause, held special significance for readers of this magazine, for some of their stories could be accurately classified as science fiction or fantasy. The name Albert Tertz appeared as the author of FANTASTIC TALES *(Random House, 1963), which included a novelette about a man who can predict the future.* THE MAKEPEACE EXPERIMENT *(Pantheon, 1965) by the same author relates how the mastering of the hypnotic force of "Mental Magnetism" makes it possible for a single individual to almost take over Russia. Nikolai Arzhak was used as the by-line for* THIS IS MOSCOW SPEAKING *(1961), based on the premise of a government decree ruling murder legal for a day, with no official punishment.*

It may be less than a coincidence that an earlier Russian writer exiled for the publication abroad of alleged anti-Soviet material was science fictionist Yevgeny Zamyatin (also printed as Eugene Zamiatin), whose WE, *published in America by Dutton in 1924, contributed to his later problems.* WE *anticipated George Orwell's* 1984 *in telling of a completely regimented world of the future, The United State (in a later French printing called The Unique State), which is obviously an extension of "successful" Communism. There is a high level of technological development; indeed,* interstellar spaceships *are in the process of construction. All functions of working, eating, sleeping are carefully regulated. There is even a sexual hour, which is the only time curtains are permitted to be drawn in apartments that are constructed with transparent walls for easy observation. Children are conceived at the behest of the State only and are not raised by their parents. Planted microphones pick up any untoward remarks—even in the open parks—and carry them to the proper authorities. Official tortures are utilized to keep recalcitrants in line, and ultimately the entire population is subjected to brain operations to ensure docility and obedience. There are elections, but only one candidate is ever presented. High green walls surround the cities, outside of which live wild "free" people who enjoy the sympathy and assistance of certain of the city dwellers.*

Only the intercession of Maxim Gorky saved Zamyatin from probable

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

imprisonment and death as the result of the publication abroad of a continuing series of "heretical" works. In 1931 he was permitted to leave Russia with his wife, and the rest of his life was spent in poverty and exile in Paris, where he died in 1937.

Until WE *was reprinted in the United States in 1959, it was known primarily to scholars. While obscurity was a contributing factor, the influential literary critics of the 1920's and 1930's were so strongly leftist and pro-Communist as to block any important attention to such a work. Discussion of its contents was left to researchers like Frances Theresa Russell in her book* TOURING UTOPIA *(Dial Press, 1932); and the anarchist Marie Louise Berneri, who died at the youthful age of 31 before her comments could see print in* JOURNEY THROUGH UTOPIA *(Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1950). She had read the French printing of* WE *when it appeared in 1929 under the title of* NOUS AUTRES. *Since 1959,* WE *has been a frequently listed and reviewed title among books on Utopias, anti-utopias and science fiction.*

Real stature for Zamyatin did not come until 15 of his stories (translated by Mirra Ginsburg) were published in 1967 by Random House under the title of THE DRAGON. *It received a two and one quarter-page lead-off review in* The New York Times Book Review *for Feb. 26, 1967, where Patricia Blake, in evaluating Zamyatin alongside other Russian writers of his period,* called him "The commanding presence of the twenties." The Times *followed with a second review in their daily edition of March 1, 1967, in which Thomas Lask endorsed Zamyatin as an artistic story teller as well as bitter satirist of his culture.*

Both reviewers singled out the short story "The Cave" for special attention. Undoubtedly one of the finest stories in the volume, it was written in 1920 and depicted the future of unsuccessful *communism by drawing a parallel between the hopelessness and severity of life in a hypothetical winter in St. Petersburg and prehistoric man who had lived in caves on the same site centuries earlier. In his search for firewood and food, with the knowledge that the shaggy mammoths were nearby, prehistoric man dared not dream of a future but fought to survive in the present. Zamyatin suggests that the Russian, in the early phase of Communism, could aspire to nothing more. The story is not dated by its political innuendo, for the period discussed could just as easily be "after the bomb."*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE CAVE

by Yevgeny Zamyatin

(translated by Mirra Ginsburg)

GLACIERS, MAMMOTHS, WASTES. Black nocturnal cliffs, somehow resembling houses; in the cliffs, caves. And no one knows who trumpets at night on the stony path between the cliffs, who blows up white snow-dust, sniffing out the path. Perhaps it is a gray-trunked mammoth, perhaps the wind. Or is the wind itself the icy roar of the king of mammoths? One thing is clear: it is winter. And you must clench your teeth as tightly as you can, to keep them from chattering; and you must split wood with a stone axe; and every night you must carry your fire from cave to cave, deeper and deeper. And you must wrap yourself into shaggy animal hides, more and more of them.

A gray-trunked mammoth roamed at night among the cliffs, where Petersburg had stood ages ago. And cave men, wrapped in hides, blankets, rags, retreated from cave to cave. On the Feast of the Intercession of the Holy Virgin, Martin Martinych and Masha closed up the study; a few weeks later they fled from the dining room and huddled in the bedroom. There was nowhere else to retreat; here they must last out the siege or die.

In the Petersburg bedroom-cave things were much as they had been in Noah's ark not long ago: a confusion of beasts, clean and unclean, thrown together by the flood. A mahogany desk; books, stone-age pancakes that seemed to have been made of potter's clay; Scriabin, Opus 74; a flatiron; five potatoes, scrubbed lovingly to gleaming whiteness; nickel bed-steads; an axe; a chiffonier; firewood. And in the center of this universe—its god, the short-legged, rusty-red, squat, greedy cave god: the cast-iron stove.

The god hummed mightily. A great fiery miracle in the dark

Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc. from THE DRAGON: FIFTEEN STORIES *by Yevgeny Zamyatin, translated by Mirra Ginsburg.* © *Copyright 1966, 1967 by Random House, Inc.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cave. The people—Martin Martinych and Masha—worshipfully, silently, gratefully stretched their hands to it. For a single hour it was spring in the cave; for one hour the animal hides, claws, fangs were discarded, and green shoots—thoughts—struggled up through the ice-crusted cortex of the brain.

"Mart, you've forgotten that tomorrow . . . No, I see you have forgotten!"

In October, when the leaves have yellowed, withered, drooped, there are sometimes blue-eyed days; you throw back your head on such a day, so as not to see the earth, and you can almost believe that joy, that summer are still here. And so with Masha now: if you close your eyes and only listen to her voice, you can still believe she is the same, the old Masha; in a moment she will laugh, jump out of bed, throw her arms around you. And what you heard an hour ago—a knife rasping on glass—was not her voice at all, it was not she . . .

"Mart, Mart! Just as always now . . . You never used to forget. The twenty-ninth: St. Mary's day, my name day . . ."

The cast-iron god still hummed. As usual, there was no light; the light came on at ten. The shaggy, dark vaults of the cave swayed overhead. Martin Martinych, squatting on his heels, all of him drawn into a knot—tighter, tighter!—still stared, with head thrown back, at the October sky in order not to see the faded, withered lips. And Masha—

"You know, Mart—what if we lit the stove the first thing in the morning? To make the whole day—just as now! What? How much do we have? There must still be about a cord left in the study?"

It was a long, long time since Masha had been able to get herself as far as the arctic study; she did not know there was no longer any . . . But pull the knot more tightly, still more tightly!

"A cord? Much more! I think there must be . . ."

Suddenly, the light: exactly ten o'clock. And, breaking off, Martin Martinych shut his eyes, turned away. It was harder in the light than in the dark . . . And in the light it could be clearly seen—his face was crumpled, claylike (many people had clay faces now—back to Adam). And Masha—

"And, you know, Mart, I would try—perhaps I could get up . . . if you lit the stove in the morning."

"Of course, Masha, of course . . . On such a day . . . Of course, the first thing in the morning."

The cave god was running down, shrinking. It was quiet now, crackling faintly. Downstairs, at the Obertyshevs, a stone axe was chopping the knotty logs

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of an old barge—a stone axe was splitting Martin Martinych into pieces. One piece of Martin Martinych smiled a clayey smile at Masha and ground dried potato peelings in the coffee mill for pancakes. Another piece—like a bird that has flown into a room from out of the open—dashed itself blindly, stupidly against the ceiling, the windows, the walls: Where can I get some wood—some wood?

Martin Martinych put on his coat, buckled on a leather belt (there is a myth among the cave dwellers that a belt will keep them warmer), and clattered with the pail in the corner near the chiffonier.

"Where are you going, Mart?"

"Only a moment, downstairs, for some water."

On the dark staircase, ice-crusted from splashed water, Martin Martinych stood awhile, swaying, sighing. Then, the pail clanking like a prisoner's chain, he went downstairs, to the Obertyshevs: they still had running water. The door was opened by Obertyshev himself, in a coat held together with a rope, his face, long unshaven, a wasteland overgrown with rusty, dusty weeds. Through the tangle of weeds—yellow stony teeth, and between the stones, a flick of a lizard's tail—a smile.

"Ah, Martin Martinych! Some water? Come in, come in!"

Impossible to turn with the pail in the narrow passageway between the outer and the inner door—the passageway is full of Obertyshev's firewood. The clay Martin Martinych painfully struck his side against the wood—a deep dent formed in the clay. Then a still deeper one, from the corner of the chest of drawers in the dark hallway.

They crossed the dining room. In the dining room was the Obertyshev female and three Obertyshev cubs; the female quickly hid a bowl under a napkin: a man had come from another cave—who knows, he may suddenly rush and seize it.

In the kitchen Obertyshev turned on the faucet, grinning with stony teeth.

"Well, and how's the wife? How's the wife?"

"The same, Alexey Ivanych, the same. In bad shape. And then, tomorrow is her name day, and I have no more wood."

"Use the chairs, Martin Martinych, and the chests . . . The books too: books make an excellent fire, excellent, excellent . . ."

"But you know yourself—all the furniture in the apartment is the landlord's, all but the piano . . ."

So, so . . . Too bad, too bad!

And now, in the kitchen, the strayed bird could be heard fluttering up, rustling, darting left,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

right—and suddenly, desperately, it dashed its breast against the wall: "Alexey Ivanych, I wanted . . . Alexey Ivanych, could you . . . only five, six pieces . . ."

Yellow stony teeth through tangled weeds, yellow teeth staring out of the eyes; all of Obertyshev was sprouting teeth and they grew longer and longer.

"Martin Martinych, how can you! We haven't got enough ourselves . . . You know yourself how things are, you know yourself, you know yourself . . ."

Pull the knot harder! Still harder! Twisted tight, Martin Martinych lifted the pail—and back through the kitchen, the dark hallway, the dining room. On the dining-room threshold Obertyshev thrust out a slippery, lizard-quick hand: "Well, goodbye . . . But see that you slam the door, Martin Martinych, don't forget. Both doors, both—one cannot keep the house warm enough!"

Out on the dark icy landing Martin Martinych set down the pail, turned, and shut the first door. He listened, but he heard only the dry, bony tremor inside himself, and his gasping breath—a broken line of dots and dashes. In the narrow passageway between the doors he stretched his hand and touched a log of wood, another, and another . . . No! He quickly thrust himself out onto the landing and closed the door. Now he must only slam it to, so that the lock will click . . .

But he could not do it. He had no strength to slam the door on Masha's tomorrow. And on the faint dotted line traced out by his breath, two Martin Martinych's locked in mortal combat: the old one, who had loved Scriabin and who knew he must not, and the new one, the cave dweller, who knew—he must. Gritting his teeth, the cave dweller knocked down, throttled the old one, and Martin Martinych, breaking his nails in his haste, pulled open the door and plunged his hand into the woodpile . . . one piece, a fourth, a fifth, under his coat, inside his belt, into the pail. He slammed the door and bounded upstairs with great, animal leaps. When he was halfway up the stairs, he suddenly halted on an icy step and pressed himself against the wall. The door had clicked again below, and the dusty Obertyshev voice cried out, "Who is it? Who's there? Who?"

"It is I, Alexey Ivanych. I . . . I had forgotten to close the door . . . I wanted . . . I came back—to shut it better . . ."

"You? Hm . . . How could you? One must be more careful. With everybody thieving nowadays, you know it yourself. How could you?"

The twenty-ninth. From early morning—a low, ragged, cotton

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sky, breathing ice through the gaps. But the cave god had filled its belly in the morning, and began to hum benignly: never mind the torn sky, never mind the toothy Obertyshev counting his logs. It does not matter, it's all the same. "Tomorrow" is a word unknown in the cave. It will take centuries before men know "tomorrow" and "the day after tomorrow."

Masha got up and, swaying from an unseen wind, she combed her hair in the old way: over her ears, with a part in the middle. And this was like a last, shriveled leaf fluttering on a naked tree. From the middle drawer of his desk, Martin Martinych pulled out papers, letters, a thermometer, a small blue vial (he hurriedly pushed it back, so Masha would not see it), and finally, from the farthest corner, a black lacquered box: on the bottom of it there was still some real—yes, yes!—real tea. Tilting his head back, Martin Martinych listened to the voice, so much like the voice of old.

"Do you remember, Mart: my blue room, and the piano with the covered top, and the little wooden horse, the ashtray, on the piano? I played, and you came up to me from behind . . ."

The universe had been created that evening, and the astonishing, wise mask of the moon, and the nightingale song of the bell, trilling out in the hallway.

"Do you remember, Mart—the open window, the green sky, and below, out of another world, the hurdy-gurdy man?"

Hurdy-gurdy man, miraculous hurdy-gurdy man, where are you?

"And on the quay . . . Remember? The branches still bare, the rosy water, and a last ice floe, like a coffin, floating by. And the coffin only made us laugh, for we would never, never die. Remember?"

Downstairs they began to split wood with a stone axe. Suddenly they stopped. Someone was running, shouting. And, split in two, Martin Martinych saw with one half of him the deathless hurdy-gurdy man, the deathless wooden horse, the deathless ice floe; and with the other half, his breath a broken, dotted line, he was with Obertyshev, counting logs of wood. Now Obertyshev had finished counting. Now he was putting on his coat, all of him overgrown with teeth, now he furiously slammed the door, and . . .

"Wait, Masha, I think there's someone at the door."

No. No one. Not yet. It was still possible to breathe, to tilt one's head and listen to the voice —so much like the old.

Twilight. The twenty-ninth of October was growing old, peering with the intent, dim eyes of an ancient crone—and everything shriveled, hunched up, shrank under the insistent stare. The vaults of the ceiling settled lower,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the armchair, the desk, Martin Martinych, the bed, everything flattened out, and on the bed—an altogether flat, a paper Masha.

Into the twilight came Selikhov, the house chairman. Once he had weighed two hundred and forty pounds; now half of him had ebbed away, and he knocked about loosely inside the shell of his coat like a nut in a rattle. But he still had his old booming laugh.

"Well, then Martin Martinych, in the first place. And in the second place, congratulations to your spouse on her name day. Of course, of course! Obertyshev told me . . ."

"Some tea? . . . a moment—just a moment . . . We have real tea today. You know what it means—real tea! I have just . . ."

"Tea? Well, I would prefer champagne. You have none? You don't say! Haw-haw-haw! The other day a friend of mine and I, we made ourselves a brew out of some Hoffman drops. It was a howl! We got stewed . . . 'I am Zinoviev,' he says: 'Down on your knees!' A howl! And then, as I was going home across the Martian Field, I met a man in nothing but his vest, I swear to God! 'What's wrong?' I asked him. 'Oh, nothing much,' he says, 'they've stripped me out there just now, I'm running home to Vasilievsky.' A howl!"

Flattened, paper-thin, Masha was laughing on the bed. All of him tied into a knot, Martin Martinych laughed louder and louder—to give more fuel to Selikhov, to throw in a few more logs; if only he wouldn't stop, if only he wouldn't stop, if only he went on about something else . . .

But Selikhov was running down; after a few last quiet snorts, he was silent. He dangled right, left inside his coat-shell and got up.

"Well, my dear lady, your little hand. Yos! Don't you know? Your obedient servant—Y-O-S, as they would say it nowadays. A howl!"

The floor was rocking, turning under Martin Martinych's feet. With a clay smile Martin Martinych held on to the door post. Selikhov was puffing, ramming his feet into his huge snow boots.

In his boots and fur coat, mammothlike, he straightened up and caught his breath.

Then silently he took Martin Martinych by the elbow, silently he opened the door into the arctic study and silently sat down on the sofa.

The floor in the study was icy; the ice cracked faintly, broke from the shore, and floated whirling downstream with Martin Martinych, and from the distance, from the sofa, from the shore, Selikhov's voice was scarcely audible.

"In the first place, and in the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

second place, my dear sir, I must tell you: I would crush this Obertyshev like a louse, I swear to God . . . But you understand: if he makes an official complaint, if he says,—'Tomorrow I'll report it to the police . . .' Such a louse! I can only advise you: go to him today, right now, and shove those damned logs down his throat."

The ice floe rushed faster and faster. Tiny, flattened, barely visible—no more than a splinter—Martin Martinych answered—speaking to himself, and not about the firewood . . . What's firewood? No, about something else: "Yes, very well. Today. Right now."

"Excellent, excellent! Such a louse, such a louse, I tell you . . ."

It was still dark in the cave. Cold, blind, made of clay, Martin Martinych stumbled dully against the things piled in confusion, out of the flood. For a moment he was startled: a voice, sounding like Masha's voice, out of the past . . .

"What were you talking about with Selikhov? What? Ration cards? And I was lying here, Mart, and thinking: If it were possible to get up some energy and go away somewhere, to let the sun . . . Oh, how you clatter! As if to spite me. You know, you know I can't stand it, I can't, I can't!"

Like a knife on glass. But it was all the same now. His hands and feet had become mechanical. To lift them and to lower them he needed chains, winches . . . And one man could not turn the winch; you needed three. Straining at the chains, Martin Martinych put a teakettle and a saucepan on the fire, and threw in the last of Obertyshev's logs.

"Do you hear what I'm saying to you? Why don't you answer? You hear me!"

Of course, this was not Masha, this was not her voice. Martin Martinych moved more and more slowly, his feet sank in the shifting sand, it was harder and harder to turn the winch. Suddenly the chain slipped from the block, the arm shot down, clumsily catching at the kettle and the pan. Everything crashed to the floor. The cave god hissed like a snake. And from the distant shore, the bed—an alien, shrill voice: "You're doing it on purpose! Get out! Get out at once. I don't need anybody, I don't need anything—I want nothing, nothing! Get out!"

October twenty-ninth had died, and the deathless hurdy-gurdy man, and the ice floes in the sunset-rosy water, and Masha. And that was right and necessary. There must be no impossible tomorrow, no Obertyshev, no Selikhov, no Masha, and no Martin Martinych. Everything must die. . .

The mechanical, faraway Martin Martinych was still going

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

through some motions. He may have tended to the fire in the stove, picked up the pan, put the kettle on once more to boil. Masha may have said something again. He did not hear. There was nothing but the dull ache of the dents in the clay, made by words, by the corners of the chiffonier, the chairs, the desk.

Martin Martinych slowly drew out of the desk drawer bundles of letters, the thermometer, some sealing wax, the box of tea, more letters. And finally, from somewhere at the very bottom, the dark-blue vial.

Ten o'clock: the light went on. Electric light—barren, harsh, plain, cold, like life and death in the cave. And just as plain, beside the flatiron, Opus 74, and the pancakes, the small blue vial.

The cast-iron god hummed benignly, devouring the paper of the letters, parchment yellow, bluish, white. The teakettle tapped its lid, gently calling attention to itself. Masha turned, "Is the tea boiling? Mart dear, give me . . ."

And then she saw it. An instant, pierced through by the clear, naked, cruel electric light: Martin Martinych, crouching before the stove; the letters glowing pink like the river at sunset, and, over there, the blue vial.

"Mart! You . . . you want to . . . already . . ."

Silence. Indifferently devouring the deathless, bitter, tender, white and pale-blue words, the cast-iron god purred softly. And Masha—as simply as she had asked for tea: "Mart, darling! Mart, give it to me!"

Martin Martinych smiled from far away. "But you know, Masha, there is only enough for one."

"Mart, but there is nothing left of me, anyway. This is no longer I—I'll soon be . . . anyway . . . Mart, but you understand—Mart, have pity on me . . . Mart!"

Ah, the same, the old voice . . . And if you tilt your head . . .

"I lied to you, Masha. We do not have a single piece of wood left in the study. And I went to Obertyshev, and there, between the doors . . . I stole, you understand. And Selikhov said . . . I must take it back at once—but I burnt everything, everything! I don't mean the wood—what's wood!—you understand me?"

The iron god was dozing off indifferently. Houses, cliffs, mammoths, Masha flickered, going out.

"Mart, if you still love me . . . Mart, remember! Mart, darling, give it to me!"

The deathless wooden horse, the hurdy-gurdy man, the ice floe. And that voice . . . Martin Martinych slowly rose from his knees. Turning the winch slowly, he took the blue vial from the table and gave it to Masha.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

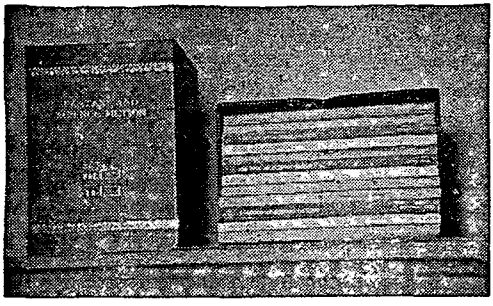
She threw off the blanket and sat up, rosy, quick, deathless—like the river at sunset long ago. She seized the vial and laughed.

"Well, now, you see: it wasn't for nothing that I lay here, dreaming of going away. Light another lamp, that one, on the table. So. Now put something else into the stove. I want the fire . . ."

Without looking, Martin Martinych swept out some papers from the desk and threw them into the stove.

"Now . . . Go, take a little walk. I think the moon must be out—*my* moon, remember? Don't forget to take the key, or you will shut the door and there won't be . . ."

No, there was no moon outside. Low, dark, thick clouds like a vaulted ceiling, and everything—one vast, silent cave. Narrow, endless passages between the walls; and houselike, dark, icy cliffs; and in the cliffs—deep, red-lit hollows. There, in those hollows, people were squatting by the fires. A light icy draft was blowing white dust underfoot, and over the white dust, the boulders, the caves, the crouching men, unheard by anyone, went the huge, measured tread of some unknown monster mammoth.



Handsome, Sturdy

VOLUME FILES

for Your Copies of

FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION

Each Volume File will keep 12 copies of FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION clean, orderly, and readily accessible. Sturdily built, the files are covered with a rich black and red washable leatherette, and the lettering is in 16-carat gold leaf.

Reasonably priced at $3.50 each, 3 for $10.00 or 6 for $19.00, they are shipped fully postpaid on a money back basis if not satisfactory. Order direct from:

JESSE JONES BOX CORPORATION

Dept. F&SF P.O. Box 5120 Philadelphia, Pa., 19141

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It's been fashionable lately to picture espionage as a ho-hum, businesslike affair and its agents as rather a sour lot, constantly making compromises with each other and themselves. We confess an affection for the more extravagant spy story, á la Ian Fleming, and in that tradition here is a superspy without peer, a breathing gadget called . . .

NIGHTWALKER

by Larry Brody

TEST NUMBER ONE WAS NOT going quite as well as he had expected.

Frank Whalen *itched.*

He lay spread out on the rocky ground, peering intently at the Air Force Space Research Center one hundred yards away. A group of low concrete and stucco buildings clustered together behind a high electrified fence, and each building contained either the notes or the actual equipment for some top secret project. It should have been so easy. Nothing could stop him.

But an itch.

Whalen's problem was his tights. The elasticized material clung to his body so that there would be no danger of his failing because his clothing had caught on anything, and the dead-black color made him virtually invisible in the moonless night. But one thing he hadn't considered was the possibility of any allergy, of his body reacting unfavorably to what he wore. At first he had been aware only of a distracting annoyance, something that could be ignored. Now, however, his entire body, particularly his legs, burned, and it was all he could

Copyrighted by Robert Schoenfeld, © 1967

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

do to keep from crying out. Swearing silently, Whalen reached back and scratched the back of his thigh, knowing that he'd find no relief.

Enough, he told himself. Let's go, you're committed now. There could be no turning back. He found that he was squinting, so he flicked a molar with his tongue and turned up the brightness. Much better. He could see as well as if the sun were shining brightly. Now, it had to be now, while the guards were on the other side. He jumped up and, pumping with his arms, ran to the fence as quickly as he could.

For an instant he stood panting, making certain that the sentry who had just appeared to his right was still too far away to spot him; then he gave his stomach a quick, inadequate scratch and reached out, grabbing the fence with a black-gloved hand, and at the same time he used his tongue to press another button in the switchboard located in his mouth. (What, he wondered inanely, will my dentist say?) Climbing swiftly to the top, he dropped down into the compound and sighed with relief. Thank God for reflexes, he thought. If he had had to think before he'd acted, he never could have gotten up the nerve to go through with it. He didn't know the theory behind what he'd just done, but it worked. He'd been able to interfere with the current in this section of fence, and that was all that mattered. Results were what counted.

Now if he could only stop that *itching*.

He looked around and got his bearings, then trotted over to the building he was interested in. Security measures weren't what they should have been. But then nobody expected a one-man raid. Reaching the building, he began to walk around to the door. He stopped. A sentry stood guard, a rifle in his hand and a dog beside him. Whalen hadn't prepared for that. Ah well, they wouldn't be hard to handle. He clicked a tooth. One touch and they'd be out. Unless their bodies could take a high voltage electric shock.

The dog growled and turned toward Whalen, sensing his presence, and Whalen ducked back behind the building, hearing the soldier mutter something to the animal. He heard a tentative step, then another, as the sentry and his dog came toward him. Just as the dog's head showed around the corner, Whalen leapt forward. The dog sprang, but its jaws closed on empty air as Whalen ducked beneath it and ran into the guard. There was a crackle of electricity, and the soldier lay unconscious. The dog lunged again. Its nose hit Whalen's stomach, and it yelped and fell to the ground. Whalen turned off the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

current and bent down to make sure they were still alive. He didn't want to kill anyone. Or anything. Not *now*.

Turning his attention to the door, he found that it was locked. There was no time to search the guard for a key, so Whalen took a small instrument from the pouch on his back and picked the lock, opening it easily. Whalen smiled. He could never have done it if he hadn't gone to college. Intra-fraternity animosities were actually paying off. After all, to short-sheet an enemy, one first had to enter his room. He wondered what his "brothers" of long ago were doing now, if they were sitting happily at home, recovering from an "exhausting" day at their nine-to-five jobs. He was sure they'd think he was crazy if they knew what he was doing. And maybe he was.

Going into the room, he went to a large file cabinet. It too was locked, but he got it open even more quickly than he'd opened the door. Let's see, what did he want? Ah, there was one, and this one. And, of course, this. His face, irritated by the mask he wore over his head, burned horribly, so he pulled off the covering and threw it on a desk. Let it stay there. A memento. A completely useless clue for the brass to worry about. He pulled the sentry and his dog inside the building, closed the door, locked it, and left the way he'd come. *Itching.*

So ended the first test.

The second test was even easier. He returned the following night. To be sure, there were more guards, more dogs, but he was more sure of himself, and long underwear worn underneath his stretch-suit kept his body from itching. (He was worried. He'd noticed that morning that he was covered with a red rash.) It was a simple matter for Whalen to return to the building, return the plans to the files, and leave a carefully selected note taped to the inside of the door. It was an old photograph of John Wayne in uniform, proclaiming, "They can't get past us!" Beneath that caption Whalen had scribbled hurriedly, "It's been a pleasure. The Nightwalker." Then he jammed all radio transmission in the area and set off the alarm at the main gate. Just to keep the extra guards busy. Funny, he thought, how his teeth were good for just about everything but eating.

But for Whalen test number two was anticlimactic. He hadn't had to hit anybody.

Now it was time to learn the results.

Douglass, the CIA man, was tall and lean, very hard looking. He acted like a man who had read too many Ian Fleming novels, for he played the James Bond

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

role to the hilt. Turning from the window, he smiled coldly. "Well, John," he said to the heavy man who sat across the room, "it certainly looks as if Mr. Whalen has proved his point."

Whalen sat in a chair near the CIA agent's desk, watching "John." The beefy man appeared to be in his middle forties, and he looked like an athlete who had let himself go soft. Whalen wasn't quite sure as to who he really was. He was dressed as a civilian, but out in the hall someone had addressed him as "Colonel," so Whalen assumed that he was representing the Pentagon. Let them have their little charade. They could be as secretive as they liked. Whalen didn't care. The colonel laughed humorlessly. "Quite," was all he said.

"You're agreeable, then?" Douglass said.

The colonel sighed. "As things stand he's the perfect commando. But I'd rather have his secret than him."

"I'm afraid that's impossible," Whalen said. "The notes, the records, everything was destroyed. And the man I worked with, the one who actually performed the operation, is dead." He sat quite stiffly, his body tense, hating to think about the past.

The colonel shrugged, and Douglass said, "Forget it, John. We've been all over this before. The important thing is that Mr. Whalen is willing to put his unique talents at our disposal."

"I don't like it," the colonel said. "Whalen, you're too good. I don't like the fact that what happened at that Space Research Center could very easily have been real."

"It was real," Whalen said, "to them. They didn't know. I risked my life to show you that I'm on your side. Now you'll have to trust me."

"For the present," the colonel said tightly.

The CIA man broke in before a full-scale argument could erupt. "Let's get to the point," he said, lighting a cigarette but carefully failing to offer the others a smoke. "Mr. Whalen, as of this moment you work for me, and the 'mister' no longer prefixes your name, as far as I'm concerned. John's not too happy, but then he never is. Don't worry about him."

Whalen smiled, relaxing. Scratching his neck, he said, "Fine. When do I start?"

Douglass sat down behind his desk, and the colonel leaned forward, breathing in Whalen's face. "Right now," the colonel said, "I've picked out your first assignment myself. Let's hope you do as well against the enemy as you did against us.

But for some reason Whalen didn't think he meant it.

Whalen had never been in pris-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on before, and he didn't like being in now. Although he had no way to compare them, he was certain that U.S. jails were much more comfortable than their Red Chinese counterparts. He squatted naked on the floor of the tiny cell and clicked his tooth, bringing in a radio broadcast from Formosa. He'd been listening to old American rock-and-roll for three days now, and he thought he was going to go crazy. No Chinese torture could have been as bad. But he had to stay tuned to the island so that he could keep track of time. At least there they sometimes spoke English.

He hadn't eaten since his capture, and he imagined that his much-worked-for musculature was fading away. A large, angular, rangy-looking man to begin with, he looked down at himself and was sure that his ribs were now protruding farther than his pectoral muscles. All that weight lifting wasted. He did a few weak push-ups. It was time to get out. He'd found out all he needed to.

His mission—calling it "suicidal" would be speaking euphemistically, he thought bitterly—had seemed quite simple. He was to rescue an American agent who'd been discovered and imprisoned. Rader, a college professor, had pretended to want to defect to the Chinese. He had visited various military installations and, as the Chinese attempted to convince him of the correctness of his proposed action, had been allowed to see many things that were considered top secret. One week ago, just as he was boarding a plane to return to the States and "think things over," he'd been arrested as a spy, his cover broken. Whalen's job was to help Rader escape or, failing that, obtain from him all the information he could and bring it back home.

Nothing to it. Except that someone (probably the colonel) had decided that the quickest way for Whalen to reach Rader would be by his being in the same prison. So, clad in his uncomfortable black suit, Whalen had parachuted from a Formosan jet, after only one very sketchy and frightening lesson, landing near Peking and finding himself surrounded by Chinese police. And as he'd been led away for illegal entry (according to plan), he'd seen his plane blasted out of the sky.

And yesterday he had learned the crowning irony. Rader really was a traitor. The Formosan radio station had announced his defection, telling of how he had had himself arrested because he feared for his life, because he had thought that his fellow Americans were going to kill him and his family back home. At a press conference he had told how he had thought that by pretending to be jailed he could live in China without having any harm come to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

those he loved. But finally, Rader said, he had realized the hypocrisy of it. By exposing the imperialist blackmail, he would defeat the people's enemies. It was a beautiful speech. Whalen had almost thrown up.

So now he was in prison, and it was all for nothing. If Rader was telling the truth, it was all a waste. But the only way to find out was to escape and pay the teacher a visit before leaving the country. Whalen swore at the colonel's ineptitude. He had to get out.

The heavy steel door slid open, and a jailer entered, followed by another man carrying Whalen's stretch-suit. The jailer's machine gun was pointed right at Whalen, and Whalen doubted that even he could move fast enough to disarm the man without being shot. Instead of attacking, he leaned back against the cold wall. "Good morning, Chink," he said.

"Put on your clothes and follow me," the man said.

"I'm to finally get an audience?"

"Put on the clothes."

Whalen took the garments and looked through the pile. "Where's my underwear?"

"Put on the clothes." The guard swung the machine gun forward as if it were a club. If Whalen was going to do anything, now was the time. But he felt weak and decided to wait.

He dressed quickly, and the itching started. It was mostly mental now, but soon it would be for real. These devious Chinese! "Got my mask, pal?"

"Mask?" Hmm, he had a larger vocabularly than Whalen had thought.

"The thing that goes over my head, hides my handsome face, you know." He gestured.

"You don't need it."

"Oh?"

"Let us go." The man motioned for Whalen to walk out ahead of him, and Whalen left the cell. Two more armed guards waited for him. One on each side, they escorted him through the hall, up three flights of stairs, and into a small office.

A smiling young officer sat behind a spotless desk. "Good morning, spy," he said pleasantly.

"A pleasure," Whalen said. With his Nightwalker clothing on, he felt much more confident. Being naked, he thought, is not good for the old ego.

"We shall see about that," the Chinese officer said. "I am Yang. Lieutenant. You may as well know that we know all about you."

"Really? Mind if I sit down?"

"There is no chair."

"How about the floor? I'm not proud." He eased himself down, watching the surprised look on his captor's now serious face. His legs and stomach were starting to itch, and he scratched unashamedly.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Were I an American I wouldn't be proud either," Yang said. "But come, let us hear your version. What was your useless mission?"

"I thought you knew. I was supposed to get captured so I could investigate your prison conditions. Make sure things were all right. About the food you don't serve—"

"Nonsense. I shall tell you why you came. You were to 'rescue' a certain Professor Phillip Rader. Or so you thought. What you weren't told was that he couldn't be rescued because he didn't wish to return to your country. You've been used as a pawn in a dangerous game."

"I can handle myself." But a vague doubt began to form in his mind. It almost made sense. Had the colonel deliberately lied?

"Shall I tell you your real purpose? You are a sacrifice, although your government may not know of it. You've been sent here to test our might. An American Supersoldier versus the Chinese Supersoldier."

"That's absurd. Look at me. I'm no superman."

"Ah, but you are, my dear sir, we all know that. You're to be a gladiator, so to speak. And this afternoon you'll be sacrificed in an arena, because even with all your power you won't have a chance."

"What power?" *How had they known about him?*

"Very good, very good, quite a protest. Look, you've been betrayed. We've been expecting you. They really should have told you the truth; it would have been much more fair," Yang said smugly.

"Listen, I'm a spy. I admit it, but that's all."

"Then explain the notes which your country has sent to various embassies in Peking. The French received a detailed report on you from your own CIA, and the CIA knows that anything the French know, we know. Our bugs are very well placed. You are Frank Whalen—don't interrupt me, I know you've already admitted that much. But you're also known by another name—you style yourself the Nightwalker—it goes with that tight suit you're wearing, I believe. You're fast, you're skilled, and you've got some sort of electrical power. A shame, isn't it, that the cell doors here aren't electrically operated? You could leave at any time if that were the case."

Whalen scratched silently, refusing to admit or deny anything. Yang's face seemed to fade away, replaced by that of the colonel. The colonel, looking disapproving, thinking that not only was Whalen expendable, but that he should be expended as quickly as possible.

"We in Mother China," Yang went on, "have also developed the prototype for a superior soldier. Unless you prefer to work for us,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

you shall fight him, and, of course, you will lose. This information will then be leaked to the higher levels of the governments of your country and its supporters, and they'll see how utterly useless it is to try and stop us. Your mask—a childish thing—and the power pack we took from you when you were captured will be returned in time for the contest. But we'd prefer it if you'd admit our superiority and join us." He paused, waiting for an answer.

It was too pat, too slick. Whalen didn't quite believe him, not yet. "What happens if I win?" Whalen said. Evidently Yang didn't know that Whalen's power source was within his body, where his appendix had once been, and wired directly to his nervous system. The powerpack he'd been carrying was simply supposed to cut in if for some reason the built-in battery wasn't working.

"You cannot possibly win," the officer said flatly.

"Why *not*?"

"Because from this time on all definitions of the word 'strength' are meaningless. This man, this ravager, *is* strength."

"Can't we try to find a third alternative?" Whalen asked.

He didn't fully realize the situation he was in until he was on his way back to his cell. Everything he had just been told was logical, that was the terrible thing. As he saw it, the colonel—fat "John" would do as a villain until he could find someone else—had reasoned that if Whalen won this little bout, U.S. prestige would be enhanced and Whalen's power, his very existence, would be justified. And if he lost, well, no one was really very safe when Whalen was around anyway, and the word could be spread that his powers were *not* government-given. But why hadn't Whalen simply been told the truth? It was clever, but now it wouldn't work. There would be no fight.

Whalen clicked a tooth, electrifying himself. He threw himself to the ground, kicking back and knocking the guard behind him to the ground with a crackle. Rolling to the right, he tripped another guard and sent him sprawling, unconscious, into the third. A kick in the neck kept the third man down. Turning off the voltage, he picked up their guns. He flicked another switch and homed in on the various electrical connections in the building, locating the power source for all the alarms. He deactivated it, jamming the current in that strange way he couldn't explain. Now his only thought was to get out, and he ran down the stairs, searching for something that looked like a doorway.

Reaching the floor his cell was on, he continued downward, planning. Once outside he would have to find out exactly where he was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and figure out a way to leave the country. Going to Hong Kong seemed to be his best bet.

He ran down two more flights of stairs and found himself in a hallway different from the others. It was wider, and sunlight streamed in from a large window at the far end. Whalen ran to the window and stood there panting, wishing he'd been fed so he wouldn't feel quite so tired. He didn't know how long he could take this.

He saw that he was only about one floor up, but he also saw that he couldn't be in Peking, as he'd assumed. The city could be seen in the distance, but the prison was in the middle of a barren plain. The only structures nearby were a few old hovels; the remains of what once must have been a village.

He heard something behind him and wheeled around. Coming down the steps was a group of soldiers, guns drawn, jabbering at each other in Chinese as they spotted him. Well, since his escape attempt had been discovered, it was senseless to keep the alarms off. Whalen adjusted the current, setting off every siren and whistle in the building. Shocked by the sudden bedlam, the Chinese stopped for an instant, some of them dropping their weapons and covering their ears, others just looking about bewilderedly. Whalen ran toward them and increased the volume, at the same time turning down his own hearing so that he wouldn't be affected. The men ignored him and turned, running away screaming as they tried to escape the din.

He made the sirens still louder, as loud as possible, adjusting himself so that he heard them only as a dim wailing. This way he'd know if anyone found a way to stop the sound. But hopefully everyone would have to flee from the building, and he'd be safe for a while, at least until he was better prepared. He scratched, laughing.

In the hallway doors opened and white-coated men joined the soldiers in their race for the exit. Whalen watched them run, feeling himself again. One good meal and let them bring on their supersoldier, their—what was it Yang had called him?—ravager. After all, *he* was the Nightwalker, and hadn't the officer considered him an American secret weapon?

He looked out the window once more. Hundreds of men were streaming out onto the field, running toward the destroyed village and collapsing on the hard ground. Dropping the three guns —he didn't think he'd know how to shoot them anyway—he walked into the nearest room, wondering why he'd seen nobody leave it.

He closed the door and stood motionless, shocked.

The *silence* was deafening.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He could hear his heart pounding, his blood racing—and nothing else. No background noise, no sirens. Nothing. Quickly he returned his hearing to normal.

"Soundproofing. China isn't entirely savage, you know," a familiar voice said. The room was a biological laboratory of some kind, filled with cages of mice and dogs. From behind a high table stepped Lieutenant Yang, unarmed. "Don't look so surprised," Yang said. "You have private elevators for the elite in America, don't you? And I must keep in touch with my project. I *thought* you'd try something rash. You are formidable even without your extra equipment. I underestimated you."

Whalen shrugged, looking around the room, and Yang said, "The sounding of the alarm was very clever. This is the only fully soundproof room as yet, so the project won't be disturbed. A laboratory in a prison? Where else are there so many *eager* volunteers? But now you haven't helped yourself very much, have you? You've caused a little pain, but those who will really suffer will be the men locked in up above, the men in their cells, because they cannot escape the sound. So why not turn it off? You still have to face—"

"Where *is* your project? I think he doesn't exist."

"You merely voice your own hope. He is here. Beneath the skin of an average Chinese soldier is a fine steel mesh which makes him practically invulnerable, and, of course, he feels no pain."

"How nice."

"And due to an alteration in his body chemistry, a change in the very nature of the muscle tissue, his strength is without limit."

"Well, I'll believe it when I see it," Whalen said. But that, he was afraid, was liable to be much too soon.

"How about now?" Yang said, smiling blandly.

Whalen tensed, dropping into a crouch. "Very well. If he exists." His mouth was stiff and unworkable.

"It is a shame this shall be wasted. For there will be no witnesses—"

"Send him out. *Send him out!*"

"Send him out? But my dear Mr. Whalen, it is I whom the Nightwalker shall fight." Amazed, Whalen saw the officer turn, reach out and pick up a massive steel workbench as if it were made of cardboard. Yang flipped the bench up and down, laughing, and pushed out his incredible arms, throwing it at Whalen, who dropped to the floor, out of the way. The bench crashed behind him. I'm too fast, Whalen thought desperately; I've got to be. He can't beat me if he can't hit me. And if I can get at him—

Yang leaped forward, arms outspread, trying to grab him, but

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Whalen dodged easily, pivoting to the side. Whalen vaulted over a low counter, crashing into a group of small cages and sending them flying.

"Ah? Panic already? Come now." Yang smirked.

"You talk too much," Whalen said. He jumped, switching on the current and kicking out with both legs. He hit the officer solidly in the stomach and heard a satisfying thud, and a crackle. That should take care of him.

But Yang gave only slightly, moving backward instead of falling. And he appeared uninjured. "Invulnerable," he taunted. He came at Whalen.

Whalen moved just in time, rolling aside and jumping to his feet. He waited for Yang's next move. If his electricity had no effect, he had to fight a defensive battle and pray for a break. His side ached from hitting the cages, and he felt dizzy. That break had better be soon.

Yang stood before him. He spread his arms out as if asking his opponent to hit him.

"All right," Whalen said. He increased his current and stepped forward on the balls of his feet, sending a solid left to the other man's jaw. It was a mistake, he knew it, but he had to do something. He connected and heard a crunch. He felt a stab of pain shoot up his arm, and he fell back out of reach. The pain was almost unbearable, and although he tried, he couldn't move his fingers.

Yang laughed. "Come. Now the other hand. Come."

Whalen reached out with his good hand and grabbed an empty cage. He threw it and watched defeatedly as it bounced off Yang's chest. The man didn't look like much, but his boast was proving true. He couldn't be beaten. All Whalen could hope to do was escape. If he could just stop this Juggernaut, if only for an instant.

Turning off his hearing, he feinted in one direction, then ran in another, toward the door. Yang dived in the path Whalen had faked, saw his mistake and kicked out; and Whalen, tired and in pain, his reflexes dulled, ran into one of the officer's outstretched legs, heard the familiar but useless crackle of electricity, and tripped. He lay on the ground for an instant, unable to catch his breath, and Yang threw himself at him.

Whalen twisted convulsively, trying to shut out the ringing in his ears, the pain he felt throughout his bruised body. Utilizing every remaining bit of strength, he rolled to the side, forced himself to stand up, and jerked open the door. Now!

But nothing happened. The alarm which he had counted on to defeat Yang was no longer blasting, and neither Whalen nor the Red officer heard anything but

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

their own breathing. Yang rose quickly from the floor, which was smashed and cracked where he had hit it, reached out, and grabbed Whalen's bad arm.

Thousands of volts shot into Yang's body, but it was Whalen who collapsed. There was nothing else he could do. Someone must have been intelligent enough to cut off the power lines leading into the alarms. It was only a matter of time before everyone was back in the building. But now the hunt for him had no reason to continue. The Nightwalker would be dead. He waited.

"Ah," Yang said, "even if you were able to produce a greater current, it wouldn't help you. You hadn't a chance against me. You are exhausted, while I do not even breathe hard. But you tried."

Thanks, Whalen thought bitterly. He wanted to get it over with. It was the colonel's fault, all of this was because of him. Yang tightened his grip and drew back his arm for the final blow, and Whalen swore to himself. Supersenses, what good were they? Electricity, how had it helped him? Without his betrayer, without his powers, he wouldn't be in this fix. Electricity!

He looked into the officer's laughing face and wondered what kind of mind lay beyond it. What kind of mind could—

Mind?

The human mind, the human brain, didn't it function by emitting electromagnetic waves? Hadn't these waves been measured by scientists? And nerve synapses, they too were electrical in nature. Perhaps, just perhaps, this whole fight had been unnecessary—no, not unnecessary, not if it had led to this discovery, this realization. Electromagnetic waves. If he were right—And why not? Frantically he worked his tongue, cutting off his own electric field and searching desperately for the right frequency. There wasn't much time.

Suddenly Yang's smirk vanished, and he stiffened. Slowly the officer released his grip and fell to the floor, moaning softly.

IT'S CORRECT TO CLIP!

Filling in the coupon on the next page offers the following advantages:

1. **Guaranteed monthly delivery to your door of the best in science fiction and fantasy reading.**
2. **Reduced rate—it's cheaper to subscribe than to buy your copies at the newsstand**
3. **An essentially unmarred copy of this issue—the coupon is backed up with this box, and its removal does not affect the text of the surrounding material.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There could be no protection against this. No steel mesh covered the underside of Yang's brain —it was only below the *flesh.* Whalen slumped beside him, conscious of a fuzzy, buzzing sensation in his head. It had worked, and he'd been able to jam the man's brain waves, but, working blindly as he had, he just as easily could have stumbled upon his own frequency. He shuddered.

But he couldn't rest yet. Recovering his self-possession, Whalen grabbed Yang's hair and, crawling, dragged him into the laboratory. Climbing to his feet, he closed the door. He found a desk in a corner and, amid the barking and whining of frightened dogs, searched through the drawers, stuffing any data relating to the self-proclaimed "ravager" into his clothing. Then he bent over the man and cautiously switched off the current. The buzzing in his own mind stopped, but Yang remained unconscious. Whalen wondered if the man would recover, and, if he did, how he would explain his defeat. But there was probably some cell damage, perhaps quite a bit.

He sighed. He'd give himself fifteen minutes rest, and then he'd make his way out. In spite of his pain, in spite of his hunger and exhaustion, Whalen felt strangely confident. If he could survive Yang, he could survive anything.

Anything.

He thought of how he'd been lied to and used. He'd have to fight his way back, but he'd return to the States a much wiser man.

And he'd practice with his new power, refining it, making it safe for him to use, so that he could have a little talk with his employers, give them a demonstration. They'd certainly be interested. And when he was through demonstrating, the colonel wouldn't doubt him anymore. The colonel wouldn't be able to doubt anybody anymore.

Whalen smiled.

He scratched his chest. Now if only he'd stop itching!

Mercury Press, Inc., 347 East 53 St., New York, N.Y. 10022
Send me The Magazine of FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION.
I enclose ☐ $5.00 for one year ☐ $9.00 for two years
☐ $12.50 for three years

Name F-2
Please print
Address .....
City .....State.....Zip #.....
Add 50¢ per year for Canada and P. A.; $1.00 for other foreign countries

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FILMS

Samuel R. Delany

BARBARELLA

Screenplay by Terry Southern, Roger Vadim; a Dino De Laurentiis production; directed by Roger Vadim. Running time: 68 minutes.

THERE IS AN AREA OF ART THAT has always fascinated me. If we view it expecting nothing at all, we are sure we have seen something great. If we view it anticipating greatness, it looks like nothing at all. The explanation would seem that such works of art are merely good. But that isn't it. It is rather that to make its statements fully, this type of art must speak to a thoroughly un-engaged mind. The majority of art that pretends to "greatness" spends much of its aesthetic effort bending our engagements to the proper paths.

Roger Vadim's films have always fallen into this area. He is popularly known as the discoverer of Bardot and is currently the husband of Jane Fonda, *Barbarella's* star. But films like *Blood and Roses* and *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* have had their enthusiasts among all intellectual levels since their appearance. Just as many have called them baroque nonsense.

The screenplay of *Barbarella* is by Terry (*Dr. Strangelove*) Southern. The visual director is Claude (*The Lovers of Truel*) Renoir. And the film is a fascinating combination of the lush and the satiric. Barbarella flies in a spaceship lined with gold fur. The men who save her life (Mark Hand, an incredibly hairy iceman; Paygar, a blind angel with real wings; and a bumbling revolutionary who lives in an office of transparent plastic tubes and malfunctioning electrical equipment) are all rewarded by sexual favors. Twice she is brutalized in Grand Guignol manner, once by a herd of mechanical dolls with metal teeth (shots of blood dribbling on torn, black-mesh stockings) and once (*à lá* Hitchcock) by hundreds of carniverous budgies. Her reaction to rescue from the first is, "Oh! Thank you," and in the midst of the second she comments, "I suppose it's a very poetic way to die."

Barbarella, with its fibre-glass scenery and scale-model sets, is the exact opposite of "2001." Here, nothing looks real. It has all that made the Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers serials magnificent and has put them in something like coherent form. Nothing is taken seriously, which is as it should be.

(*continued on p. 103*)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Josephine Saxton's last appearance here was with THE CONSCIOUSNESS MACHINE *(June 1968). A somewhat different version of that story will be published this summer by Doubleday as* THE HIEROS GAMOS OF SAM AND AN SMITH. *Mrs. Saxton's latest story is an affecting portrait of a girl whose unhappiness is manifested as something that is (perhaps) alien and real, and (perhaps) removable.*

DORMANT SOUL

by Josephine Saxton

"IT IS LIKE BEING IN PURGATORY," Lucy had said to her doctor, visited reluctantly, eventually, because the thing was getting so very much worse that she could not work. Widowed, a freelance commercial artist, she could remain at home and was not therefore observed holding her head, heard moaning, seen shuddering uncontrollably. Lonely nights left her in peace to lie awake clutching the blankets tightly so as not to go into the bathroom and swallow all the codeine, those tablets that even in triple dosage did not reach the crawling pain inside her skull. As if her brain had developed sensory nerves and was being experienced as a mass of creeping anguished *stuff*—by some other brain.

"Migraine!" the doctor had said, and all his treatments and diets had failed. It developed that Lucy was so unallergic to substances suspected of causing migraine that the fact in itself was of interest. Her pains did not respond to any pain-killer he could offer, nor did ergotamine have any effect. He admitted after six months that she was not suffering from migraine per se.

Unable to get warm, even wrapped in all her woolen garments and hugging, cheek cushioned, the coke-stove in her kitchen, hot coffee constantly sipped, hot-water bottle stuffed down the back of her slacks, she had tenta-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tively suggested to him that as it was the height of an English but nevertheless hot summer, there might just possibly be something wrong with her circulation. He had snorted, impatient with hypochondria and incurability in all the manifestations of it which had been brought to his notice, checked her blood pressure and dismissed her.

"Take more exercise if you like, no harm there. Swallow vitamin B if you think it will do you any good, but in our affluent and well-fed society, *nobody* suffers from vitamin starvation!"

Ruddy cheeks twitching, clear eyes glaring. Healthy man.

She had not gone back to him for several months after that, but wrestled alone with the desire to be dead. The Wilkinson sword razor blades with which she whisked off her body hair once a week became minor gods; she prayed they would come alive and slice through her veins. They never did. Her hands, held by some force other than the desire for oblivion, could not accomplish an act of slashing.

She was so frightened of her deepest depressions that she began to refer inwardly to the lump of matter that would sit twenty-four hours contemplating space, too miserable to accomplish the simplest tasks, as "her" rather than "I," and threw away the threatening, alluring razors, and hairy, deplored her own odor which seemed peculiarly strong, permeating everything, rising above all the stronger germicidal bath soaps that she had tried, till it became a familiar part of the slowly progressing decay that was overtaking her little house that had once been almost too clean, shaming neighbors and friends who had looked in vain for dust to comfort their consciences. They no longer called, discouraged perhaps by her own inability to communicate anything except misery. And this was not widowhood that was causing her anguish; some other force within her drew her down into bogs of fear. And she did not know what it was.

Psychiatrists were out of the question; she had tried one who had dosed her with stultifying pills of varying hues which made no difference to the nameless sorrow, and which made her head much worse. Psychoanalysts were too expensive, and she had as little faith in them as other women might have had in priests, even given religion as a "belief." On her thirty-fifth birthday she entered the kitchen to make a cup of coffee and saw written on the wall:

SOLE INDOOR MEANT

There was no doubt at all that she had written it herself, although she could not recall having done so. She would have liked to have wept bitterly about her

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

state of mind and gone for a walk on the moors, blown out the nonsense, but she was much too exhausted and knew that this nonsense, whatever it was, was much too thick and strong to be blown or worked out. She went to tell her doctor that she thought she was going mad.

"It's all right to go a bit mad, you know," he said heartily, "just so long as you know about it. It's when you go a bit mad and *don't* know about it is the time to worry. Join a club."

He had meant to be consoling. So she was not mad then; no need to worry that she wrote messages to herself almost nightly. Cryptic, punning things such as: IKONOCLASSED. MYSTICHASM. DOG IS RED.

They were written in the nearest material to hand, sometimes butter on the tiles round the sink, tomato soup on the tablecloth, stove soot on her clean wall. Lucy read and stared and tried to recall when she had written these mad things. It must have been during her sleep? One morning she found her blue poster paint open and splashed on the carpet in her little sitting room, but worse, her own handprints, identifiable by the simian line on the left and a small Stanley-knife scar on the right, were plastered bright over all the walls. Blue handprints! To keep off the evil eye. She might have laughed or cried, could not, and could not wash off the resistant polymer either. She was not superstitious, never knocked on wood. Why did she do those things?

"Why does she do those things?" said Lucy, aloud and alone.

"Menopause?" another doctor had suggested, terribly embarrassed when she explained that she was only thirty-five. She had aged terribly then, this last eighteen months. At twenty-nine she had been mistaken for a teenager many times.

One morning the message on her dressing-table mirror was clearer and more explicit:
DRINK WINE TONIGHT
was marked in gold-flecked green eyeshadow that she had been too lazy to use for almost a year. She was amused, if being amused can be expressed by thumping the head with clenched fists, reaching down inside for laughter that will not manifest. Well then, if she was telling herself that to be sodden with alcohol might relieve things a little, she would listen, and so she hauled on a raincoat and slopped down to the carry-out where she bought three bottles of Spanish Burgundy. What would Jim have thought, seeing her now? Neither of them had drunk much. Which is doubtless why he crashed the car after that party. Six whiskeys, two lagers, one gin. Flames twenty feet high, and her

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lying on the grass verge, thrown clear to watch him die. Unharmed. Stunned. Couldn't move to help. Tragic case.

Soon got over it though, as he would have wished. He hated sentiment, would have liked her married again. And who would marry this slut that she saw in the shop window, reflected in the thundery evening?

At half past seven she was at home, drinking her wine, and it tasted very good, cutting through the miasma of her mouth until by half past eight the second bottle was opened. She felt almost hungry then and thought about the grocer's box, which had lain three days unpacked in the kitchen. She never went shopping herself if she could help it but rang up orders which were put inside the kitchen door, and she paid by check, usually by mail too. Avoid contact with people. Boring.

She was thinking, then, about Portuguese sardines and potato chips when she first became aware of Armaziel, who was making rustling noises just the other side of the kitchen door. He stood back smiling and shining brightly when she entered, only a little apprehensive of expected rat or mouse, holding a large book which she intended to throw. It was the Bible, and Armaziel smiled more to see it, for he was of that race that has been mistaken for angels, even in the days when Jacob dreamt.

The widow Lucy was too drunk by now to throw herself before him or to hide her eyes from the super-detergent whiteness of his garment, so she stood nevertheless awestruck that anyone, even a bloody angel, should have been able to enter her so thoroughly locked house.

"What are you doing with my potato chips? Who are you anyway, you long-haired shimmering weirdo?" Wine was good for her level of communication, she reflected, reaching out for the box of chips which the angel held.

"I was just going to bring them in to you, together with a little cream cheese, but it seems the cream cheese is 'off'. You should have put it in the fridge."

"I should. You are right. My domestic standards are not what once they were. Do I assume that your familiarity with the nature of such earthly things as cream cheese rules out entirely the first impression I receive, which is that you are an angel, from Heaven?"

Lucy recognized her own familiar drinking style of speech. Sort of pompous, careful, witty in an old-fashioned, boring sort of way. Drunk as anything. Seeing things. Hallucinations. Which came, of course, from her unconscious mind. And who would have thought that in my mind I had guardian angels? Me that is not religious. All this is just in my mind. Or something.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I am from another planet," said the angel.

So that was it. She would now be supplied with details she did not know she knew, so that it would all be real, undeniable. Maybe he would take her for a UFO trip, like Adamski and those lunatics. Oh Jesus Christ, was this madness? It was not unpleasant. It was good to have company. The shining being was nice.

"There are no such beings as angels that I know of," said Lucy's new friend, and she shook her head slowly, questioningly.

"Tell me," she said, drinking.

"We are often mistaken for such because of our dress materials which have for centuries been far ahead of yours. And our hair and our wings, of course."

"Of course. The wings." Down to his heels they were, white, beautiful. Some enormous swan.

"Our way of visiting people on such planets as Earth who are in distress, you see. Mainly we only visit people in certain mental and emotional conditions. And for a very good reason which I have to explain to you."

Lucy opened the potato chip box and held it out. He took a few and munched. Apparitions *ate*? Lucy began cramming and crunching. Potato chips were maddening; one could never quite eat enough at once, until suddenly you realized that you were so full of them that you were ill.

"You have been ill for some time?" said the shining one.

"I have. How did you know?"

"I have been observing you, of course. I spend a lot of time on Earth. I'm what is called a guardian. I fight the demons of Sirius Eight wherever they try to grow."

"You sure you don't mean Sirius Nine?" giggled Lucy, who knew she was drunk and having hallucinations, knew also that she had once read a science-fiction story about Sirius Nine. Or was it Eight? It was the first time in over a year that she had felt anything like happy; it was nice, this game with the unconscious mind. And yet, another part of Lucy had already become convinced of the reality of the person before her. It was her intellect telling her that the whole thing was imagination. Intellect could not always be trusted.

Enough potato chips. Where was the wine.

"Have some wine?"

"No thanks, alcohol does terrible things to my flying ability, I fear. More dangerous than just having wobbly knees, if you happen to be several feet above ground."

"I can imagine. How'd you get here?" asked Lucy, supping.

"Spaceship to pilot-station, then flew. It's resting just on the edge of your oxygenated belt, rather high."

"I see. And you breathe Earth

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

air?" and she sounded derisive. Aliens schmaliens, where was his helmet?

"Yes, I breathe Earth air but have to take pills to balance up my blood. On my planet the air is much richer and purer."

"Naturally. You wouldn't smog it up like we do. You're advanced."

Then Lucy felt sorry for having been rude.

"Excuse me for being facetious. It's all rather unusual."

"I know, don't worry. Sometimes I get things thrown at me; people scream. I always try to get my new patients drunk before I arrive; it lessens the shock. They think they're having d.t.'s, which is bad enough, but not as startling as the truth."

"You amaze me, really. What is your name?"

"Armaziel."

Well, she had surely never heard that before. How inventive the unconscious mind? Collective? She would check some books. Like the Bible, Jung, Jewish books. So interesting all this; swaying slightly now, better sit down.

"Lovely name. Boy or girl?"

"Sex is universal and irrelevant on our planet. We dispensed with it about four thousand years ago."

Judas Priest! This was a real widow's imagination at work! She had always been a feminist and had detected a certain small surge of gladness under the grief at her husband's death. Bereavement was also freedom. What would have made everything perfect would have been the inability to be sexually frustrated, like this shining androgyne who nibbled chips daintily but not effeminately. But sex was a perpetual nag at her body, drowned only by the greater pains of head and heart.

"Why did you come to me?"

"To help you out of your despair, but first to explain its nature to you. It is not what you think, but something more serious and rather astonishing. I shall have to explain first or we can't effect a cure."

A cure! To be well and normal again!

"Tell on then. I'll make coffee." She put the kettle to boil but Armaziel refused coffee. He washed a glass and drank cold water from it. Lucy watched where he put it down, so she could check later. He began to explain to Lucy why she was so ill, and how to get cured.

It was the demons on Sirius Eight, of course, although Armaziel only called them demons because they looked rather like black vultures four feet tall, and they had a habit of possessing human bodies, leaving their own bodies back home. It took them months to accomplish it, but they had great patience, and the end result was a Sirian bird-demon perfectly disguised as a human

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

being. An insane human being. They were trying to take over Earth in this way. Had been trying for hundreds and thousands of years. For just as long, Armaziel and his race had been trying to stop them. Because if the Sirians were allowed to spread through the universe, Lucy was given to understand, terrible things would happen. Destruction and evil followed them wherever they got a hold. They were doing quite well on Earth, but Armaziel's crew were also doing quite well. The unobtrusive battle went on day and night. But psychiatry was helping the demons unwittingly by drugging patients. Once drugged, no help could be given, especially in a hospital.

Lucy reflected how the numbers of mental patients was rocketing up. Never been so many mad and unhappy people.

Around midnight when the wine was wearing off and Armaziel was still with her, sitting awkwardly on her wheel-back chair with his lovely wings half opened, Lucy began to know that it was all true.

She interrupted him just as he was giving her the main part of the recipe for exorcism of the bird-demon now possessing her to reach out and touch him. He grasped her hand with his, and it felt cool and real and solid, and it encouraged her. It was the first hand she had held for a long time, and she would have liked to weep, but the bird-demons had a grip on her emotions. They atrophied emotions, so that their victims left their bodies gradually and without fuss. No noise, just quietly being eaten up inside. Yes, Armaziel was real and true and she could feel his goodness. It was not therefore nearly as chilling as it might have been for her to realize that the hand she grasped was the outer of two which grew, beautifully formed, from the same wrist, the second one placed facing the other, very flexible.

Armaziel pointed out that a person of human or more than human intelligence who has wings also needs two pairs of hands. For carrying things mid-air, for entering spacecraft, for fighting off enemies. One pair would have been inadequate.

"We often say we need two pairs of hands," said Lucy, wondering how she could have dreamed this thing up. But she had not, it was real. Doubt and certainty came and went, but mostly she felt certain of his reality. And it was the most reassuring thing, not frightening. She had someone on her side, someone who knew what was wrong with her, could help in a real way. Someone who cared. Even if it wasn't real? But it had to be, and she had to try his cure. Oth-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

erwise she was lost, bird-demon or unnamable earthly illness, it was all the same.

So she sat on into the night making careful mental notes of everything she had to do to repossess her own body again, eject the demon, and lead a normal, healthy existence once more. It was not too complex at all, just rather silly in some respects, and embarrassing. To get seven people to pray for you twice in one day for two separate half-hours. How? Ring up strangers, for she had no friends left. There was no harm in trying, but what a fool she would feel. A matter of life and death she would say. And it was, too.

It might well be the real cure, even if it was all an hallucination. It was a theme that recurred throughout history, angels appearing to people in distress, with a plan of action, instructions against evil forces. Shining swords and that. She got up and made notes on the kitchen wall underneath the injunction to drink wine. The process of healing was going to be a mixture of prayer, magic and shamanism.

Armaziel told her that the reason some shamans had such success with their strange cure was because the recipes had been taken up aeons ago, not forgotten by more primitive peoples. Sometimes the prayer alone was enough, in a newly established case, accounting for the success of some church exorcisms. But if there was one other thing besides the concentrated good thoughts of seven human beings that a bird-demon could not stand, it was tincture of benzoin. It was poison to them, like prussic acid is to humans. Shamans use lots of it. Either the demon left quickly, or he died.

"Now I must go," said Armaziel, "and thank you for your hospitality."

He opened the door and went out. Lucy tried the door; it was locked, and the key was hidden in a drawer. She checked.

Armaziel called back through the letter drop.

"Fear not. It is one of our minor talents, opening locked doors."

The following day Lucy ran up pounds on her phone bill, trying to get people picked at random from the book to pray for her for two half-hour sessions in one day. Four-thirty to five and ten to half-past. No special words or anything, just a concentrating of good thoughts and hopes, and perhaps even *love* towards herself. She began all her calls with the words:

"Excuse me for bothering you, a complete stranger, but would you consent to pray for someone if they were in trouble and asked you to?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Some of them put the phone down on her after the word "stranger"; some put the phone down after "trouble" and some put the phone down after "pray"; some went a little further, just so that they could be very rude to Lucy after she had explained what she wanted. It was astonishing how widespread was her own cynical atheism; what was worse was the number of people who would not even think of helping in any way at all, and said so.

"You're in trouble, you get out."

"Your own fault, I daresay."

"Immoral people always ask others for help, squealing . . ."

"I'll ring the police."

"Go see a doctor."

"You must be joking."

"Wasting my valuable time."

Lucy began to wonder about people. Would people who could not spare thoughts for a soul in torment spare bread for a starving body? Were there really so many selfish people, closed people? She suppressed the thought that Armaziel and his fellows would have a hard time of it here on Earth; most of the inhabitants were halfway ready for the other lot from Sirius Eight already. But by the middle of the afternoon she had seven people human enough to go along with her. One was a Roman Catholic lady of eighty-three.

"Yes, my dear. I'll pray for anybody. How many Hail Mary's do you think would be enough?"

One was a Hindu shopkeeper.

"Yes, Madam, Mr. Murkejee will pray. Perhaps you would like to call at our hygienic establishment in the near future. We stock everything the best for eating too. Two half-hours guaranteed. I pray each day anyway, much praying is good for soul. Good day to you."

One was a complete atheist.

"Okay. Anything for a laugh. I'll send you my love."

One was a Christian Scientist.

"Yes, of course. But if you call round soon I can introduce you to our little group. None of us is ever ill, one need never be ill. Right thoughts and right deeds, you know."

Lucy said she was not sure that she would call, but she might. Feeling guilty, thinking that one good turn deserved another.

One was a young-sounding person who asked Lucy to pray for her the following day. Lucy said she would, but had no faith herself. The girl had cancer.

One was a middle-aged businessman who said he had not prayed for anyone, even himself, since he was a boy.

"If you think it will help you. I'm not sure I know how, mind you."

And one was a truck driver who said he would think of her on his run to Edinburgh. He was not religious, he said, but she

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sounded so unhappy. He wanted to know what was the matter with her, but she did not explain. She said that she could not tell him.

"Well, I once got a girl into trouble myself."

Guilt would help him to pray then, she thought, and began her other preparations, all according to Armaziel's instructions. She ignored carefully all her feelings that what she was doing were the acts of a madwoman. It no longer mattered one way or the other; she just felt convinced that she had to go through with all this. If she did not, then the pains in her head and her depressions would get worse. She would die. If it did not work, well . . . But it might. Stranger things . . . But not much stranger things, and certainly never to her, she thought, lighting white-block firelighters in a baking pan on the sitting room floor. She shivered and shuddered, and it occurred to her that it was no wonder she was always cold. Birds had feathers, she had none. And maybe their planet was hot, too.

She drank the last of her potion. It was hot milk with an egg beaten into it and a lot of powdered nutmeg, sweetened with sugar and laced heavily with brandy. This was to give her quick energy for what was to come, Armaziel had said, and the nutmeg was to open the edges of her mind slightly. It warmed her a little.

She wondered what her doctor would think if she told him that this one mug of posset had done more for her than all his high-mood sweeties. She felt more relaxed and warmer. Pills schmills! A minimal easing of the creeping in her skull. Nice. She settled further into her easy chair, inhaling the benzoin that the firelighters were soaked in, clutching three bay leaves in her left hand, inhaling also the several sticks of incense she had lit and placed all around the room. Rose and heliotrope odors of argabatti, heady and fragrant. They hated it, Armaziel had said. She leaned forward and took some more bay leaves from the packet, and threw them in the little fire where they flared and crackled, adding their own smoke to the room. Then she took the benzoin bottle and sprinkled it around her chair, ignoring the indelible marks it was making on her carpet, soaked a Kleenex in the stuff and held it to her nose. It was clean and cutting, and when she had taken several deep breaths of it she threw the paper onto the fire also. Then she sat back, eyes closed, and waited. She checked mentally to know if there was anything she had forgotten. No, it was all done.

She found herself yawning. Deeper and deeper yawns. Up they came from the depths of her lungs; she could not reach deep enough for the yawns; the air in-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

take was enormous. Quite involuntarily, gulping to the peak of a yawn, holding jaws back and back like a sleepy cat, snarl teeth, like the peak of an orgasm, pow! Air sucking in like a vacuum cleaner, deep inside. Rest. Then another yawn. She was so preoccupied with yawning that she had no consciousness left to think that maybe there was not enough air in her room, that perhaps benzoin had this effect. It did not matter how or which way things worked; the yawns were feeding something within her, filling up spaces in her being that would soon have been filled with something else.

Then the tears. No emotion, no feeling; sobbing, racking, moaning. Just tears. Tears in pearls, single and shining, tears in little rivers, moving like molten glass down the sallow cheeks, forcing through the closed eyes, hot and thick. Tears in salt ribbons, pouring, dripping, soaking the front of her sweater, tears that could have been caught in tearglasses, one, two, three, damn you slave, bring me the half-pint tearglass, the pint tearglass; I weep for Rome, and when I weep, I weep; such tears a crocodile a mile long would have lost a competition for how many tears. . . .

Lucy's head was moving. How did that begin? Moving like this, in rhythm to some silent tabla, a wild, fast, intentional rattle and knock, the timing is perfect! Gene Krupa never did better, nor Pandit Chatur Lal, nor Beatle nor player of the Chinese gong, who might be lost forever in sending out vibrations to the ends of the Universe, were it not for the call of the stomach. I have heard them thought Lucy, touching the metal with their little sticks, and the disc makes music itself, I could have sworn; the rhythm helps to straighten the head, she had heard, but not like this! Rattle rattle go the teeth, loose boom the brains, knocking against the hollow skull like cod's roe boiling in a pan. And the pendulum, it has been out of true all this long, sick time. It should go back and forth, regularly, evenly; and as the head swings side to side so fast, it makes the pendulum go right, like *so*. To a silent music, a source of something very important. More important than the heart and the blood. Something central.

God! There has never been such pleasure as shaking the head. I needed this and did not know. Why does not everyone do it? Why is it not generally known that head-shaking is about the best thing one can do? What a discovery! Shake shake. And in the jungles of Bengal, the Head Dancers; Tamil, Telugu? They do it. I saw a film and marveled, at the impossibility, swirling and shaking hair like black corn silk standing in a row, moving to the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

music the men make. Hour after hour, and meanwhile the maize grows tall; if they did not dance each Spring like this, then the maize would die. Flash of white eye among the perfectly maneuvered hair, necks like rubber, they move round to touch the chest and the back. Practice for years and years, initiated as children, some die of brainstorms, and here am I, Lucy, doing it without effort. Involuntarily. My neck has no bones, it moves unbidden by me, I do nothing, something moves me this way.

My arms are beating on the sides of my chair and making signals in the air, out, in. Like Swedish drill. Or Balinese message dancing. My fingers making symbols in the air, and I do not understand. Whence comes the control, and I can never perform those party tricks, where people separate their fingers. "Can you do this?" they say, holding out their hands. "Can you do this?" they say, waggling the ears. Clever bastards, no! I cannot do anything. But can you do this? Watch me, Lucy, sending messages with my hands. To music. Cannot hear the music? Well, I can. It happens, you see.

My legs are battling with the floorboards, wild beating, such rapidity, on and on, still pouring the tears. Something is rising up within me, something good. And my head, the top of my head. Oh God, what happens now. Something is leaving. Something squeezed, struggled, writhed, pushed, scrabbled, slithered, scratched, fluttered. Out of the top of my head. And is gone. Rising within me, from my middle somewhere, something good. Up, through, into my head, filling the empty space. What is it? A substance. Warm, good, sweet, unfamiliar. Remember. What?

Happiness.

Lucy slept deeply, in a protective haze of smoke that was poisonous gas to a bird-demon from Sirius Eight, who surely now flew screaming and clawing and grinding and cursing like any old-time villain or thwarted evil genius, away to his leader, back to his own body, away, uttering imprecations. Foiled!

At just before ten Lucy awoke, feeling something stirring. It was hunger. She made herself a warm malted milk and took herself off to bed, smiling and sleepy and lay with the light on, relaxed, contemplating the sweetness of normalcy. To be warm as others are warm, to be alive and not want death.

The room filled up with still more light, and Armaziel stood there and told her that all would now be well; the seven helpers had prayed well, each in their separate ways, and were beginning again. She need do nothing more, just sleep. She would close

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

now, so that the bird-demon thing could not re-enter.

"Goodbye Armaziel." She wished him luck in his never-ending battle, she thanked him, she lay and felt gratitude. He had gone, the light was dimmer. She put out her bedside lamp, closed her eyes.

"So much I never asked him. Where exactly is his planet, how long does he live, what about UFO's, are they his or the other lot's. Why Earth, who is winning. I forgot to ask . . ."

Sleep without dreams, for ten long hours.

The happy days were making happy weeks; Lucy's liberation from the bird-demon of Sirius Eight was complete and perfect, no slimy trace had he left; he was gone.

She could look in her mirror and see that she looked young again, that her complexion was healthy. She could put what she liked in her bathroom cabinet; drugs, razors, they were merely useful not threatening. They did not mean potential death, for she never thought of death. Life was good. Just to be alive and work and go out and come in and sleep and wake and eat. These things were good, because they were normal and without unusual pain. To get up from a chair without having first plucked up strength to make the effort; Lucy still took a delight in this. To wear a thin frock again without hugging herself against the inner chill, this was wonderful. She did not often think of all the other sick souls who were possessed by the dreadful aliens, but when she did the thoughts were difficult, and she soon found herself identified with her own happy present. For after all, how could she help? She had prayed in return for the dying girl who had prayed on Lucy's liberation day, feeling embarrassed, stupid, without faith. But as to how to *repay* for her health, that was another question. Because now she half doubted the reality of Armaziel. He had been, she thought, a figment. A figure come up to her out of the unconscious, in the nick of time as she hovered on the edges of insanity. Therefore there were no other people being possessed by bird-demons from Sirius. They were sick in their own separate ways. Lucy could not help. And yet, sometimes at night, she would know for a while that it was all true, and that if she could find a way of warning the world about what was happening, she might help Armaziel in his fight against evil. It was her duty. But how to find the sick ones in the first place? How to tell them without being thought mad herself? It was impossible.

She thought around all the ways that she could make known

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the danger to Earth. Tell psychiatrists. In for treatment straight away. Write to some Church Prelate? Either no reply or she would receive a visit from a priest who would offer "instruction." The Prime Minister? He probably got lots of letters telling him that the world was being taken over by aliens. Maybe even had a special secretary to deal with that class of letter. The Secretary-General of the United Nations? Much too busy to bother about Earth being taken over. There was really nothing she could do, she always told herself, and soon she stopped thinking about it. Her spare time, when she was not fulfilling commissions for illustration work, she spent in painting out her house, covering up the blue handprints, the messages on the wall. Soon, everything in Lucy's life was normal. She thought perhaps she might make some gestures towards social life again. Supposing she fell in love and married? It was not impossible. Perhaps even have children. She was not yet too old.

One day in late spring she wrote on the last wall in the house to be painted:

"Armaziel I need your advice."

She received no reply and so covered it with eggshell emulsion paint and went out to buy plants for her window box. She got two trailing geraniums, six blue lobelia, six assorted petunias and some nasturtium seeds. Excited with the prospect of a summer display of color at her window, she walked back through the park instead of taking a short cut by the high street. It was a beautiful day.

There were children playing in summer frocks and cotton shorts, a dog racing up and down with a stick, mothers pushing baby carriages. Birds sang and the air was soft; thousands of tulips dazzled Lucy's eyes and a mimosa scattered little yellow fluff balls around the seat where she sat to rest. All the seats were full of the old people of the neighborhood: ladies with shopping baskets and poodles, ladies with bags of crusts for the birds, old men with newspapers, old men with sticks and straw hats. Lucy recalled childhood Sunday afternoons; all that was missing was the band playing in the wrought-iron pavilion.

She sat back, thinking as she always had thought, that park benches were dreadfully uncomfortable, but that on a day like this it did not matter. An old woman already sitting on the bench immediately began conversation. Lucy's heart sank. She had wanted to be quiet. Don't be mean, she told herself. The old thing is probably lonely.

"Yes, a beautiful day," she said, and looked around, discouraging further talk.

"[illegible]n buying plants, dear?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Yes. For my window box."

"Nice, a window box. I wish I was young like you, what wouldn't I do?"

Lucy was embarrassed.

"What would you do?"

The old woman thought a moment, and Lucy looked away across the lawns to where two swans glided on a small serpentine pond.

"I'd come in here and talk to old me, I suppose," said the old woman, suddenly cackling loudly at her own joke. She rocked back and forth and Lucy laughed a little to be polite and peered into her parcel at the petunias. She should get them home and planted before they wilted.

Lucy watched furtively as the woman opened her bag and took out handfuls of crumbs or corn and scattered it on the path. Instantly birds crowded round, unafraid. One of them perched on the outstretched wrist and was content to be lifted right up to the sharp enquiring face. Lucy was amazed at how tame the birds were and put out her hand too, but they immediately flapped and scattered, gathering again close to the other end of the bench. Huffed slightly, Lucy gazed away again, and shivered. One could never really trust these Spring days; should have brought a cardigan after all. She found herself looking again at the old woman feeding the birds and noticed how extremely poorly dressed she was, black tatters drooping, holes and shreds flapping. Pitiful. Thin and worn and dirty, like a starved old crow. The breeze brought a wave of odor that made Lucy gulp and think she would move. How horrible. And familiar.

Lucy gathered up her parcel of plants and tried to get up but could not. For she recalled where she had smelled that particular smell, and it was herself when ill. This old bag of rags, possessed by a bird-demon. Then why so cheerful? One of them, now happy in evil. Lucy's head swam, crawled, ached. Lucy's voice would not say: "You are one of them, aren't you?"

The scarecrow figure with the hard little eyes looked directly at her, holding out a claw-hand with a bird on it, and Lucy heard, as if from miles away: "Nobody notices old women, it's like a disguise. I've been coming here for years to feed my little cousins."

Lucy struggled to her feet, fighting inside to keep out the *thing*.

Suddenly screamed out loud, and it came as a whisper:

"You're one of them!"

"Yes, dear. Been with them thirty years or more. We save all the souls we can get," and she displayed to Lucy a face that quite clearly had a beak rather than a nose. Save souls? Is that what they thought, these evil para-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sites? Like some dreadful Sirian Salvation Army, *converting* people? Then getting the converts to convert others, possess them?

The sun went out.

The policeman picked up the black handbag from the bench and looked inside. No means of identification, just a lot of bird-seed and a very small transistor radio. Expensive gadget for that old woman to have. He took it back to the station and made his report to the desk sergeant.

"Where'd the old bird go after the nutter attacked her?"

"Dunno. Disappeared in the crowd soon as I parted them. Gawd that girl was fierce, pelted her with bloody petunias, kicked her, punched her. Absolutely barmy, said she had discovered a bird-demon from another planet, and didn't we know Earth was being taken over? Going on awful, shouting and screaming. They took her up to St. Luke's in a strait jacket."

"There seems to be a bit of an epidemic. Last week similar case. Said we should tell the Prime Minister before it was too late. This bloke attacked a fella suddenly in a coffee bar."

The desk sergeant wrote out a ticket for "Lost Property", and tested the three buttons of the transistor radio without result. Flat battery. He wondered if it was stolen property, and that was why the attacked woman had run off like that. He put it away in the drawer, and noted that there was another one like it, still unclaimed. Very small and neat. It did not work either. Tell the Prime Minister indeed. They always thought big, these people, but acted small. Attacking a poor old lady. But they should be pitied really.

As soon as Lucy got an opportunity, she wrote over her hospital bed with hospital porridge:

"Oh Armaziel where are you now?" and the nurse washed it off, angry at the mess, and gave Lucy an extra pill. It took two of them to hold her down so that she would swallow it, but the threat of a strait jacket did the trick.

"Don't drug me nurse, pray for me!" screamed Lucy.

How cold it was in here, and Armaziel would never come again. ◄

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Here's Vance Aandahl with a story about a time when obscenity as-we-know-it has tapered down to nothing and exploded in a brand-new wild direction. Happy 21st Century!

DROOL

by Vance Aandahl

CHEWING AT HIS BONY KNUCKles in a fit of indecision, Tantalus stared at the grimy door.

Did it conceal, as the sly old grocer Raven had lecherously whispered, a porny-trove?

Or was it possible, perhaps, that half a dozen bulldozer-shaped Vice Squaders were waiting there with shackles for his limbs and scalpels for his brain?

Tantalus briefly recalled his former friend and neighbor, Ed Ac. They'd picked Ed up on the old Wyoming-Nebraska mono. He'd been carrying a briefcase gorged with illicit merchandise—glossy 6" by 10" Truecolor 3D odor plates, five jars of prescription synthetics, and even a fat package of the real stuff. Tantalus had been waiting for him when they released Ed three days later: smiling formally, he had marched down the styroplast steps into a meager sunshine, had marched straight past Tantalus without the least flicker of recognition in his isinglass eyes, had marched stiffly and automatically into the milling crowds moving up and down the sidewalk. The Vice Squaders had turned him into a robot. Tantalus never saw him again, but later learned that he was working for the maintenance staff in the labyrinthine bowels of the 763rd Ward's artificial glucose factory.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tantalus rolled his lean shoulders and looked around. He had come all the way to the inner city to find this address. But even though it was now past 3 a.m., the old-fashioned asphalt street was streaming with gaunt figures. He knew that any one of those blank, neutral faces might mask a Vice Squader. Maybe Ed had given them his name. Maybe they were just waiting for him to open that grimy door.

Then again, maybe his fears were groundless.

Remembering the grocer's lewd descriptions, Tantalus licked his lips and moved forward a step. Not just stills, but motion pictures too: that's what Raven had promised. He sighed once and walked quickly to the door.

Inside he found himself in semi-darkness. A single shaded bulb hung overhead.

"Hello." The voice came from the back.

Peering into the shadows, Tantalus discerned a small bald man sitting behind a glass counter. The man looked very old, and strangely, he was wearing dark glasses in the already dim room.

"Like something nice to read?" The man's voice was dry and ancient. Even in the darkness Tantalus could see the lace of protrusive blue veins pulsing in his temples.

"Uh . . . no . . ." The four or five dusty piles of old-fashioned paperbacks looked absurdly anachronistic in their display case.

"Were you looking for something else?" The man didn't smile.

"Raven told me . . ." Tantalus felt the blood quicken through his neck; he dizzied with fear.

"Who?"

"Raven. He's a grocer at the Sooper Dooper Syntho in Ward 781 . . ."

"Oh, yes. Oh, yes."

There was a long silence.

"Uh . . . he told me that you had . . . uh . . . that you showed . . . " Tantalus' voice caught in his throat.

"Movies." The old man finished his sentence. "You like 'em rough?"

Too nervous to speak, Tantalus nodded his head and looked over the hairless pate at a locked door in the back wall.

"Two hundred in cash."

The price was reasonable. Just two weeks ago Tantalus had gladly paid twice as much for a package of twelve plates like the ones Ed had been carrying when they busted him. He counted out the bills on the glass counter.

"Four shows. We keep 'em running all night. You can stay as long as you like." The old man re-counted the money, jammed it into his pocket, and reached back with a key to unlock the door.

Tantalus found himself walking down a narrow hallway even darker than the front room. At

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the end another old man was sitting in a chair. He had his back to Tantalus, and his head was thrust out of sight between two closely drawn curtains. He started guiltily at the sound of Tantalus' approach, jerked his grizzled head out of the curtains, and wiped the back of his hand across his mouth.

"Go right in," he muttered, looking down at his shoes to hide his face. "Go right in, there's plenty of seats . . ."

Tantalus edged by the old man's chair and plunged through the curtains.

For a moment all he could see was the screen. Then his eyes adjusted to the darkness and he found an empty chair. A cursory glance revealed nine or ten others, all hunched forward in their chairs. Most of them looked very old, but there were several younger men whispering in the front row.

When Tantalus looked at the screen, he was struck by the age of the film. The color was bad, and the depth looked unreal on the right half of the image. Worse, either there was no odor track or else the projector wasn't picking it up.

Finding quality pornography had gotten much harder since the passage of the new anti-smut law. Tantalus uttered a silent curse, then leaned forward to gaze deeply into the screen.

Almost immediately he felt excitement thrilling through his guts.

It was a filet mignon.

Tantalus had never managed to get his hands on a real filet, but he knew a good one when he saw it.

It was two inches thick. Two thick inches of succulent pink meat, straight from the oven, still sizzling in its own juices.

And next to it on the plate, an enormous baked potato, its split back heaped with sour cream.

And next to the potato, a dish of mushroom caps, just sauteed in butter.

And next to the mushrooms, a smaller plate of tossed salad—romaine lettuce, tomato wedges, green onions, artichoke hearts, and croutons—drenched in a thick blue cheese dressing.

Tantalus slid forward until he was perched on the edge of his seat. He gripped his knees in his hands and swallowed hard.

Suddenly the odor track snapped on. The tiny room was permeated by an irresistible aroma of steak.

Tantalus could feel his stomach contracting, opening and closing in slow, rhythmic pulses. His forehead dampened with sweat; his breath quickened.

A pair of anonymous hands entered the picture with knife and fork. The fork touched the edge of the filet. The tines prodded gently into the tender meat. The serrated edge of the knife rode

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

down the backs of the tines and sawed easily, effortlessly into the steak. And as it cut deeper, the rich red juices flooded up and rolled across the meat to drip onto the plate.

Tantalus barely knew that he was panting. He tried to control himself, but he couldn't; and as his mouth opened, the slaver poured over his lip and ran in three clear streams down his chin.

He was so ecstatic that the sudden cries around him didn't even register in his mind: "It's a raid! Run for it!"

His eyes stayed fixed to the screen even while two burly Vice Squaders dragged him out of the room.

And two days later, as the first scalpel slid into his cerebrum, he could still see—somewhere deep, deep in his unconscious mind—the delicate chunk of forked beef.

TWIN SISTERS

The rain lets down her silver hair
  Loosed from her heaven-hidden bower;
Strand on bright strand it fills the air.
  Rapunzel, who once scaled your tower?

Has any lover kissed her face?
  Has any lover found her fair
Or known her bodiless embrace?
  Rapunzel, who once climbed your stair?

—Doris Pitkin Buck

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Patrick Meadows ("Virtue. 'Tis A Fugue!" April 1967) has taught English in such unlikely places as Eau Gallie, Fla. and Peculiar, Mo. and has also "worked as choker-setter near Coos Bay, Ore., hopper filler in a plastics factory Lee's Summit, Mo., and bass man in Izmir, Turkey." The locale of this story is a far-future Greece, a strange land rooted in a new mythology based on a "Manual," a land ruled by techpriests and barren of children for twenty years.

PATER ONE PATER TWO

by Patrick Meadows

I

(FROM THE DIARY OF THE Commander of United Western Forces, General Parks)

October 17, 2007. There was more talk today in Congress about the new arms plan. The only thing that would work now is to destroy all arms. If the politicians knew what the latest one would do . . . No, even then they would talk of the Balance of Power. Must talk to Jons.

October 24, 2007. Jons is calling a special committee together during the Abstract Sciences meeting next month. Abstract Sciences, hell. What's abstract about equations that can be used to release energies in any amount? Once the principle is known, idiot savants can augment the possibilities infinitely.

October 31. Every day a new fly for the ointment. Rumors of imminent approval of the Pater Project. How to make a quiet world: build a weapon that can decimate the population, then engineer the impossibility of people replacement.

December 12. Rhodasia is spitting on the shoes of her neighbors again. I wouldn't bother jotting this commonplace down, except that Intelligence thinks that Rhodasia is on the verge of duplicating the Scorcher.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

December 15. Amid the flotsam of bureaucratic debris on my desk lies proof that the Rhodasians have the specs for their own Scorcher. Intelligence stopped three out of four agents trying to leave the country. Black Africa will be blacker still. The inventors of this beast were afraid to test it; theoretically, it sets off a reaction that will be carried by chemicals in the soil. Will it jump the Bering Strait? Is the soil on the wind enough to form a medium? We don't know. Will this stop us from using it? No.

One good thing. No one will be left around to brandish the weapon in his right hand, a flag in his left.

December 20. A popular peace writer just printed a tiny list of places that might be safe after a war. Without wanting to seem facetious, I say this to myself: I would leave tomorrow for Greece, but I have to be here to push The Button.

II

Jacson of Xios unlatched the shutters and threw them wide open to the brilliant sunlight. He glanced out over the red tile roofs toward the distant mountains: the linen sheets of mist were just unhooking themselves from the trees and lifting toward the still low-flying sun. He took a deep breath of cool air and leaned out over the window sill. He could hear the drums and tambourines, but none of the Mayday paraders were in sight yet. Then he turned to the door to the next room and listened at the wood jalousies.

Quietly he turned the knob and pushed. He could see that the bed was empty and abandoned stealth. Clopping on wood sandals over the tiled floor, he had nearly reached the closed entrance to the bathroom when a pillow hit him in the back of the head. He whirled in time to see the door slam. The lock clicked.

"Marya!" He banged on the door to the tune of rippling laughter on the other side. "Open up!"

"Open it yourself, Hercules. I'm getting dressed before it's too late. That'll teach you to take my clothes while I'm asleep." She laughed again from another corner of the room.

Jacson rattled the handle in exasperation and ran to the hall door. Locked. Suddenly inspired, he slipped out of the sandals and tiptoed to the shutters, slipping the brass latch noiselessly. Lifting one corner to avoid a squeak, he eased the shutter open and crawled onto the narrow terrace. On his back he could feel the points of the stucco as he edged his way to the window. She was standing with her feet barely apart, one knee relaxed forward, the other leg locked straight with thigh muscles showing under her taut flesh. Well-rounded hips

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nicked way in to her narrow waist; her arms were bent in duplicate as she worked to tie up her hair, her back arched twice—in at the waist, out to her shoulder blades and back in to the line of her neck. She was humming softly, smiling to herself, with her head tilted forward.

Softly he placed a hand on the damp sill to spring.

Laughter spilling all over the room, they collided this time at her door.

"No, Jac. I'm almost dressed."

"You can't look like that and get away with it, dressed or not."

She struggled, but not enough to keep them from falling to the bed together. Her hair was undone again and spread all over the pillow. She didn't move as he freed her arms to close the shutters, but she bit his ear when he came back.

While they were lying on their backs looking drowsily at the ceiling, the din hit their streets. Marya pulled the sheet from under him for a wrapper, and Jacson half dressed lying down before joining her at the window. The cobbles were strewn with red, white and yellow rose petals, flung from tub-like baskets by nude youths and maidens, all around fifteen years old. Traditionally, the last-born led the procession. After them came a violently percussive group of musicians, swaying in their drunkenness from one side of the narrow road to the other. A wagon covered with intricately painted flowers followed close behind the musicians, carrying a blond man and woman on a padded dais. They were making love. At each corner of the wagon, a techpriest stood watching, one at the front turning from time to time to prod the laboring boys pulling them with a hoarse word. Most of the noise accompanying the procession came from the singing, shouting crowds who danced in the wake of the wagon, their raucous laughter and vulgarity filling the air.

Jacson turned away, sickened in spite of himself.

"Oh, Jac." Marya still watched the lumbering crowd as it neared the turning in the road.

He felt himself becoming angry for the wrong reasons again, letting it spread to Marya. "Would you want to be towed up and down like prize animals?"

Marya blushed. She left the window and busied herself with her hair.

Chastened, he eased back his temper and sat. "I'm sorry. But I don't think the way you do about this whole thing, and you knew it when you accepted me. How will that," he flung a thumb toward the window, "help us have children? I can see how it might help *them*." He chuckled meanly at himself.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sighing like a mother before she explains something for the thousandth time to a whying child, Marya wedged the comb into the bristles of her hairbrush and set them with exactitude on the dresser. She sat on the floor and draped an arm over his knees.

"You know, Jac, I just don't understand you yet. I love you and trust you, but your bitterness and rebellion against almost everything is too much sometimes. Wait." She put her fingers over his mouth. "I know. You put up with the ritual of the church wedding; I'm glad that's over, too. But you don't really believe in anything. Not even simple fun . . . accept Mayday for what it's worth. That doesn't keep you from doing whatever you want with your life, does it?"

"Yes!" He stood and paced the floor. "This is the Fifth Year. We waited four years because only every fifth Mayday will Pater allow love to be consummated. Do you think that only during the last fifteen years of history men have become sinful and were punished with sterility? I don't. This is the sixtieth Pent. The last three have brought no children. Man can't have changed so much since we were born." He checked himself. "I'm sorry."

"I don't know about all that, Jac. But we've done what we should have for Pater and now for ourselves. And we have four more months to try for children."

"I know. I'm sorry."

She pulled him down to her and kissed him.

"All right, Marya. It's a holiday. Get dressed and we'll go to the square."

He smiled and tried to appear light-hearted, but he turned things over in his mind still. The year 2307. He and Marya were five Pents, twenty-five years old. The youngest children were three Pents; that gave people about sixty years. He would have to have a talk with Stephan, his old friend. They, at least wouldn't wait for the last man to go doddering toward his grave. *And as for Marya and the techpriests* . . . he couldn't let himself finish the thought.

III

(From the diary of General Parks.)

December 21, 2007. This might be it. Just got an innocent-looking order for a full-scale hemispheric war drill. Probably a gambit to head off the Africans. The Scorcher could be made in a hobby shop with the specs. Somebody up there hates us, probably the brass who know what it's all about. This time everybody gets into the fracas, will or no.

The same day. It's happened. The Pater Project is approved. The Enforced Universal Fertil-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ity Control goes into effect tomorrow. Generations of burgeoning children forced the government into it, but now it's a waste . . . unless we can have Death Control as well. If there's a woman around the day after tomorrow with an ovum to be irradiated, I'll be either surprised or dead.

December 24. Hurried this time. Five minutes before the Final Punch In. God help any survivors. In the next life (there must be one; this can't be *it*), I think I'll carry banners: "Long Live People", "Erase National Boundaries". I'll wear no beard, chew no nervos, smoke no DMT, have no traffic with psychedelics; but what the Love Generation learned from these things will serve as the new Bill of Rights and Wrongs. Fat Chance. Hazlitt was wrong. Man is not defined as the "animal who laughs and weeps"; he is the animal who creates giggling guns, bawdy bazookas, raucous rockets, sizzling shrapnel, hilarious howitzers, chortling mortars, bombulating bombers, lewd lasers, tintinnabulating TNT, grinning grenades . . . He was half right, though—man weeps.

IV

The square was choked with townspeople and other-islanders. They milled along the open stalls bargaining for replicas of the holy ikons, for gardenias, for ice-cold cucumbers and lemonade. Some circled the ikons themselves in the center of the square. Three times a man's height and an arm's length in thickness, the two gleaming ancient artifacts stood on their wide bases with three flanges worn by the mouths of worshippers. They were topped by a rounded cone pointing toward the heavens.

Stephan of Samos, Jacson's friend since their days aboard the *Zambak* hauling copper from Cyprus and Crete, had brought his bride, Tatiana, with him to Xios for their first Holy Period.

"Jac, look at the craftmanship on these things. The Ancients must have had tools and skills we haven't dreamed of."

Jacson had retained his depressed mood all morning. As an electroman, he suspected that the knowledge to build the ikons was developed for the same reasons that knowledge of electricity had been; something useful for men. He said as much.

"You know that kind of talk is blasphemy, friend. The priests say that the Big Part was destroyed in a wave of New Clear by Pater as a scourge because the Ancients were wicked men. Besides, if you're hinting that the ikons were tools, you don't make sense. They weren't giants."

Stephan had formed the habit of goading Jacson with conventional wisdom and obvious state-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ments. He himself was good with his hands, but when it came to anything more abstract than visualizing the shape toward which he was working the metal hot in a pair of tongs, he was quickly lost. He had learned to trust in Jacson's intuition; that's how they had found the workshops under the rūbble in Nicosia and learned how to pull wire. Formerly they had gathered material for power lines from abandoned cities.

The quintennial consecration of the ikons was about to begin. The High Techpriest and his retinue were marching pompously toward the dais, while acolytes swung censers to and fro. Marya and Tatiana struggled through the thickening crowd.

"Here come the girls, Stephan. When they get here, let's tell them to meet us later. I have some things I want to talk over with you."

Stephan decided that it would be a waste of time to try persuading him to stay for the ceremony. He glumly watched the women approach through the maze of arms and bodies holding the trinkets they had bought over their heads. Their mouths moved, but their words were drowned in the deafening drone of the crowd.

V

The noise of the festivities was muffled inside the thick-walled taverna. They had their choice of tables beneath the arches of the converted mosque and sat far from the counter. They ordered raki, pouring it into glasses of water. They downed the milky drink, hissed for more, and waited until the old man serving them retreated behind his counter.

"Steph, what are you and Tatiana going to do?"

"Do? Well, we'll go back to Samos after the festival. We've taken a house near the harbor until we see . . ."

"Until you see that you will have no children. Then . . . ?"

"Then we'll decide. What are you getting at?"

"This: You know that you won't have any children, and *they'll* decide for you. That'll be too late!"

"I don't know what will happen and neither do you. Maybe this Fiveyear . . ."

"This Fiveyear will be like the last three. I know it's easier to try to believe otherwise. Even the promise of a few months with Marya is better than nothing."

The waiter brought them cups of khave orta. Stephan bent his lips to the cup, his eyes flickering over the face of his friend. When the cup was empty, he turned it upside down on the saucer.

"*Kalo.* We've known each other a long time. What do you have in mind?" He placed elbows on the table.

Jacson leaned toward him, ear-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nestly, tenseness in every feature of his face. "I'm thinking there won't be any more children, ever." He paused to give weight to the words. "Unless someone tries to find out why, what to do . . ."

Stephan meticulously righted the cup, studied the patterns there with dissatisfaction, pushed it and the saucer aside roughly.

"And what might someone do?"

Jacson sat back in his chair, flinging his arm down in a hopeless gesture. "'Only a fool could deny that we must try. Only a fool could continue to listen to the techpriests, who are themselves fools. Or worse, liars!"

"Jacson!" Stephan clutched his arm and looked to the waiter. "Come outside."

Leaving money on the table, Stephan led the way, still holding Jacson's arm. Skirting the rearmost fringes of the spectators in the square, they entered a narrow street which led them toward the sea. They continued a distance from the main anchorage and slowed their pace to an easy walk.

"It's plain that you've completely lost your head, but I'm with you, whatever you have in mind. The blood of friendship and all that." He stopped and forced a smile from Jacson.

"*Kalo,* shipmate. But I warn you, this will involve more risk than capture by marauding Turks. When our trial period is up, if Marya shows no signs, before the techpriests can take her away, we will be gone. If you're willing, we'll come for you."

"And where do we go?"

"That can wait. In the meantime, learn whatever we can. Ask questions, especially ask older men questions. And sailors. They get around and may know something we don't. Start stashing supplies in case we do leave."

"You're serious! OK, I'll do it. And, if it's necessary, I know some places on the mainland where it's safe."

They stood facing each other in the sun, the wind blowing gently off the land, the soft lapping of a friendly ocean at their feet. Both considered the danger of leaving their islands without permission, the threat of the roaming bands on the Turkish coast. But they were after all truly Greeks, and the remote smell of fear quickened their hearts, too long safe and secure. Clasping hand and shoulder, they flung back their heads and laughed into the sunlight.

VI

"Where have you been?" Tatiana looked very young and afraid.

"Walking. What's happened?" The crowd was dispersing, avoiding each other's eyes.

Marya buried her face in Jacson's chest. "It was terrible."

"Go on. Tell us!"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"It's Dimitrios. They killed him."

"Dimitrios? For Pater's sake, who killed him?"

"The acolytes. Dimitrios screamed at a techpriest and struck him in the face."

Now Tatiana was crying hysterically.

"They cut him down; he kept crying 'Murderers! Murderers!' while they slashed at him like madmen."

Jacson thought back quickly. Dimitrios had married five years before. Because his wife bore him no child, she was taken away. Dimitrios had loved her very much.

As they moved away, Jacson caught Stephan's eyes and with a dark stare told him without words: *Would you have been any different?* He read a determined *No!* in the black eyes holding his.

VII

August found Jacson as ready as he was likely to be. He had been working as usual on the island's power lines. He had a cache of supplies on the deserted western shore. It appeared that very soon it would be needed.

There had been time, however, to glean a rough account of preholocaust history. He had spent some time with Nikos, a hermit on the eastern edge of the island who had once been a techpriest. From him he learned that perhaps the holy men had not been quite so instrumental in saving the archipelago from destruction as their story had it. Nikos, now an old man, had been a priest in his youth. His father had also been in the holy order, and his father before him. Stories passed down the generations reached Nikos with a great degree of accuracy; truth was highly prized in his family, but he was not told anything until he had been fully ordained. By then he had taken in so much false information from other sources that Nikos was agonized by the effort involved in reconciling the stories of his father with history as taught by the Church. He loved and respected his father, and he had been devoutly religious. After wavering between rejecting his father's words and scrutinizing the holy Technical Manual, he finally exiled himself to the life of meditation and hardship he still maintained.

The truth as he had garnered it was incomplete, but correct as far as it went. According to his father, there was a time when Technicians formed a secular hierarchy based on skills never made clear to him, and priests were trained in matters relating to men's souls and morals. Then the priests were not allowed to take wives, but Technicians were like all other men in this regard.

Destruction came to the rest of the world, leaving only Greece and a few survivors scattered in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nearby mainland areas, according to the occasional travelers who used to come to Greece; terror and hunger began. The two strongest segments of the population were the educated Technicians, who held most of the remaining weapons, and the religious orders. They joined forces to re-establish a peaceful existence in the islands. Soon they were identified by the people as one agency, and were before long called tech-priests.

The Technicians brought their women with them, establishing a new precedent. Soon the tech-priests began claiming those women who bore no children from their marriages, and sometimes they conceived within the Church when they had not with their husbands.

Nikos' father suggested that there was a time when a woman might bear fifteen children in as many years, though he had never seen it. He said the burden of too many children in those days had become so great that man had made a pact with Pater to reduce births, and then children were born only every five years.

Again this Pent no children were born on Xios. By spending time in the port, Jacson learned that this was true everywhere. He mourned with the others the absence of new blood. He had been twelve years old himself when he had his compulsory sea duty along with Stephan. Now the youngest man in the fleet was twenty. Practically a whole generation missing.

He sat in the waterfront taverna smelling the salt and fish mixed with sweat on the men around him. He traded stories with them, each mouthful of retsina making him more expansive. The combined exploits of three centuries of children and criminals aboard the merchant ships were sifting down in formalized fashion. Sooner or later a descendent of Homer, himself a Xiot, would be born and he would knit into an epic all the disparate tales.

Head reeling with the effects of wine and heroism, Jacson wound his way through tortuous streets toward home and Marya. Marya. Her name rang in his mind. She had become as important to him as breath. She had changed the island for him from a great hook of hills and stone to a cup of Mediterranean warmth. Soon he would have to tell her that they would be leaving. Unlike Jacson, who had traveled all through the islands and knew someone in almost every region, she had never left this island, her home. With regret he thought of her coming home in the evening after a day with her friends collecting mastic in the hills, the sweet smell of the sap on her breath. *But better to*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

leave this than to have nothing, he thought.

The moon was just lifting out of the land across the strait as he reached the gate. He stopped short. A light stretched from the door far out into the garden. He heard Marya's voice, a single harsh syllable, and then a shadow blocked the light for a moment as someone hurried out the door and ran toward the end of the garden. Jacson shouted, and he was running toward the retreating shadow. As he passed through the wedge of light he heard his name. Then his hands were on a pair of shoulders. He pushed forward, then jerked back, bringing the man down at his feet.

"Janaros!" The face of the techpriest turned up in a crooked smile. "What are you doing here?"

"It's almost time, Jacson. I like to know something about a woman." He was rising slowly, not taking his eyes off Jacson's face.

Fury in his veins, Jacson kicked with his toe pointed toward Janaros' chest. The man went back down with a grunt and rolled onto his side. Another kick caught him full in the face. Jacson bent over and whispered hoarsely, "So help me, Janaros, if you've touched her, you're dead!"

He twisted and ran to the house. Inside the door, Marya was leaning against the wall and crying.

"Tell me what happened."

She pushed herself away from the wall and went to him, still crying.

"Tell me what . . ."

"Nothing, darling. It's all right." She sobbed; he shoved her away and forced her to look at him. "Nothing happened. He said he was going to take me when the time is up. He wanted . . . but I made him leave."

He sent her to the bedroom. Breathing in gasps, he returned to the garden. Janaros had pulled himself erect by the wall.

"Get out of here! You'll never see her again." He gave the techpriest a shove that nearly flung him to the ground again.

"You'll regret this, Jacson. When the time comes, you'll pay." With a final glance, he turned and was soon out of sight in the shadows. Jacson cursed at the moon and stars and walked wearily up to bed. Marya was already asleep.

VIII

The stars were still brilliant in the heavens, even though the false dawn was washing out the deep blue at the horizon. Jacson lay awake listening to the first waking sounds of the birds. More often by the minute shrill calls broke the pristine silence.

As a boy, mornings like this had stirred emotions in him that made him remember the tales he

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

had heard in the work camps. Around the fires after the meal, there was always an old man who could tell one of the stories about a hero named Odysseus. The language was not the language of everyday. It was as though someone were reading a book through the mouth of the speaker, someone who built phrases like buildings, to stand through ages. The proud shades of those days stamped with their armor in his dreams for years. This time he thought about the reasons those men hacked and swore at each other. A woman, Helen. Paris took her and all of Greece took up arms to get her back. *And all our women will be taken from us,* he thought.

He listened to new sounds added to the first cries. Now there was a singing bird getting a head start. Others answered. Muffled feather and leaf brushing began.

Suddenly Jacson focused on a different kind of noise. Very soft, but unnaturally regular movements joined the animal sounds. The movement continued for several minutes, and Jacson rose and approached the window. Squeezed against the wall, he looked into the wide garden below. There, by the black cypress, a movement. Again. Another by the mulberry. As he grew accustomed to the shadows, he counted eight men.

His decision had been made for him: *Now.*

Brushing his fingertip lightly over Marya's cheek, he woke her and pressed his mouth close to her ear, holding her so she wouldn't speak. They dressed silently, moving toward the door to the terrace.

The door to the bedroom flung open and the lights were turned on. Janaros glanced once at the bed and started calling orders.

"Check the terrace! You outside the window, did you see nothing?"

"Nothing, your Holiness."

"Torches; search the grounds. Acolytes, check every room." There was a frenzy of activity, voices calling back and forth, boots thumping on the stairs.

"No one's here, your Holiness. They must have been forewarned."

"By whom? You yourselves didn't know until an hour ago." Janaros kicked a chair into the center of the room and sat down. "Leave two men. Go directly to the port and see that none sets sail until you have personally gone through every caique."

Boots moved out of the house. Janaros called through the window as the small contingent moved toward the road.

"You are responsible. Remember that; you are responsible." Without answering, the leader redoubled his pace, pulling the rest of the men after him with curses.

Janaros thoughtfully ran his fingers over the bruise on his cheek

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and looked around the room; his eyes rested on the bed a moment and then shifted to the ceiling. He listened intently, but he could identify only the sounds of his own men for certain. A faint suspicion grew in his mind, and he carefully walked toward the terrace, flipping the light off as he went. On the terrace he stopped, listened again, and brushed along the wall, his eyes on the eaves. He reached the railing and stopped, stretching his neck to look onto the slope of the tiles. Too late he heard the movement behind him on the vines. An arm closed on his throat and pulled. He barely had his knife free of his belt when he felt a hand grab it and push it between his ribs. He arched his back once before he fell limp and dropped to the floor.

Jacson straddled Janaros' body for a long time, breathing heavily.

A loud whisper almost directly under him called him back. "Are you all right, Holiness?" tentative, nervous.

Jacson waited till the question came again and jumped toward the voice. The surprised acolyte went flying under the weight with an audible *whump* when his back hit the ground. He was back on his feet in a low crouch when Jacson regained his own footing. They circled each other and feinted with knives and bodies. The acolyte had been trained for this; his face was a caricature of hate: in the dim starlight, only the prominent features were visible—a reversed grin, heavy forehead. They lunged at each other and twisted almost simultaneously away from the flashing points. Lunged again, and locked wrists in a wrenching grip. Jacson braced himself, pushed, dropped to the ground with one foot in the man's stomach. He pulled hard on the arms and straightened his leg. His wrist was free then, and he twisted on the ground, bringing the knife over and down. The blade pinned the acolyte's throat the the ground.

A light was moving jerkily toward them. Jacson hid himself in the vines while the torch moved to the body and was lowered. One silent arc in the darkness and it was over. He smothered the torch in the acolyte's cape and waited, ears cocked to the night sounds. Finally he climbed back up the trellis.

While he helped Marya fill a small bag, she cried. When she noticed the blood on his hands, she made him wash. Her voice was flat. "What will we do?"

"When Janaros' men return, we'll have no choice. I'll tell you on the way."

"On the way where?"

"They're at the harbor. We'll start toward Vrondadhes, north. There's an old hermit there who has a boat for fishing. That's what we want. Come on."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IX

They were well away from the house before full daylight. They walked the roads because there was no use trying to cover up. When the general alarm was put out, any place on Xios would be dangerous; until then, only the harbor would be.

The sun was already an incandescent disc in the sky over Ak Dag when they scrabbled over the stubble toward the hut. The old man was drawing water and continued cranking as he watched them hurry the last hundred meters.

"Pater has risen!" he greeted them, and he beckoned them toward the entrance to his hut.

He offered them cool water and prepared boiled coffee, serving it with uneven lumps of sugar in the saucers. He set a wooden plate of boat-shaped bread between them and watched them eat.

"Your burden is not light, my son," he said when they had finished.

"We leave for the mainland. Your boat is our means to freedom." All the unsaid things under his words were not hidden, however.

The priest raised his eyebrows and showed them his palms. "How then would I get to the fish? They know they will be caught if they come too close to the sand. But out there they are not so careful." He hadn't said no; he wanted to know more.

Caution was of no importance if it ate precious time. Jacson told everything in four sentences. The old man nodded his way through the speech. He had often talked with Jacson, and knew him.

Without hesitation, the hermit rose, put some things in a skin bag and went to the door.

"What will you do, Father Nikos?"

"Both of us must have the boat. Clearly I must go with you." He was already walking toward the sand. He stopped and turned at the water's edge, dropping his bag into the prow of the boat. Marya stepped over the gunwales and sat down as the two men tugged the keel free and turned it into the surf.

X

They took turns at the oars and Marya handled the tiny sail. By late afternoon they were rounding the northern coast of the island and were heading south. Patrols would be watching for them at Cesme and the islet Kara to the east of Xios. Jacson had the cache of food on the western coast, opposite the monastery; from there they could continue on to Samos. They stopped on the deserted beach at dusk where they slept a while and Marya prepared food. From there a stiff land breeze pulled them safely clear of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

island before dawn. When the morning lull forced them to the oars, only a thin line on the horizon was left of Xios. Two hours of rowing in the swell made Jacson regret that they hadn't taken a craft with more sail during the night. Soon the wind rose, however, and they took turns sleeping. The sun was down several hours before they pulled onto the pebbles near Kharlovasi on Samos.

XI

An excerpt from the *New World Times Tribune,* Dec. 20, 2007. Geneva (WP). The World Council today approved a hitherto top secret birth control plan. According to the science advisor to the council, the plan became actuality at the time the announcement was made.

Details of how the controls work were not given. A reliable source stated the research was done by a joint team from Spaceworks, Inc. and Biolab, Ltd., of Glasgow.

Speculation runs high here about international reaction. Some countries represented fought violently against the measure, our source stated. It was argued in the secret sessions held, he continued, that such a device could cause the demise of the whole race should the wrong people get control.

"Safeguards were insisted upon and realized," he said. "Responsible religious and civil organizations have been assigned as watchdogs over the operation, and have received technical information for use in extreme emergency."

XII

The island of Xios was alive with activity. The first full day of scouring the island for the fugitives headed the acolytes in the right direction.

The morning of the second day, Janaros was helped from the dock in the harbor onto the Ellenica, a fully rigged ketch used by techpriests in forays against the Turks or occasional scrapes with recalcitrant Greeks. Janaros' men handled him as carefully as they could, but still he heaped abuse on them, and their increased nervousness caused them to jostle him even more. Bound as he was by the bandages, afraid as he was of hemorrhaging the wound in his chest, he could not deliver the blows that second nature prompted him to give. Still, his tongue was enough for the acolytes. They placed his litter with extreme care in a protected spot on the deck and withdrew at attention.

Janaros was staring with hard eyes toward the south, squinting at the glittering water as the jib was lifted and the craft tugged the lines holding the bow fast. The last painter was shipped, and the ship headed through the mouth of the harbor, heeling hard

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on the wind. The remains of a fire on the west coast of Xios, the missing priest, and the known friendship with Stephan gave them their direction; the knot of pain and revenge in Janaros gave them the impetus; the impartial wind billowing the sails gave them headway through the sea.

XIII

When Jacson reached Kharlovasi, Stephan and Tatiana were ready. It was nearly time for them, also, to be separated for their infertility. The trio boarded a caique whose owner was away in the hills, and by midnight Marya and Father Nikos were headed with them toward Kusadasi on the mainland of Turkey. Relief to have been successful made them expansive so that no one slept. The women kept busy boiling khave and chattering all night. Stephan manned the tiller, and Jacson and Nikos trimmed the sails. A steady wind made little work. They fell silent for a while before dawn, enjoying the sense of freedom under the brilliant stars and feeling the breeze on their skin.

Jacson broke the quiet, his voice rolling out over the dark water. "Stephan, Father Nikos says that Ephesus is the place where we should begin."

"I agree. Ephesus is mentioned often in the Manual." He asked Tatiana to dig the book out of his bag.

Nikos asked, "How did you get this?"

"There are ways," Stephan responded, shrugging. "Listen to this, Jac. 'Pater is predicated on the belief that what is good for the multitude will by division be good for the individual; that for man to be orderly in his reproduction as he is in other areas is an assistance to that good; and that the responsibility for Pater should not belong to one nation or group.' This is from the Introduction."

Jacson exclaimed, "How many times have I heard that! It makes Pater sound like something manmade."

"Right. And it goes on in the same vein." He flipped some pages. "'The Central Communications Units with Pater are established in widely separated regions under the maintenance of Technical Crews of international origin.' Ephesus is named as one of the Units."

Stephan thoughtfully thumbed through the Manual and passed it to Jacson. "Most of the book is mathematics and diagrams that are beyond me. Except for the last section. Take a look." A light swell had come up, and Stephan concentrated on meeting the crests head-on.

"You mean this: 'The Units will be given top security status and will be open to inspection only by direct order from the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Standing Committee on the Pater Project of the United Western Congress.'"

There had been no United West for three hundred years.

There was practically no West.

Nikos broke in, "When I was your age, people still talked about the destruction of the Big Part. Strangers came occasionally to our island, bringing news from Italy and Africa, and sometimes, Turkey. There were in those days priests and technicians. The latter were few, and to avoid being wiped out, they joined forces with the priests. I don't know exactly what the technicians did, or why they were in danger; I was interested only in men's souls then, and felt that somehow their minds had betrayed them. Now I know that you can only reach their minds—they reach their own souls. And I am no longer sure what is truth and what is not."

With a gesture of his hand toward the Manual, he led them to his final thought: "Whatever hope man has now is there."

A swift dawn broke upon them. They had given the entrance to the bay of Kharlovasi a wide berth and neared the last promontory of Samos. The hairline coast of Turkey lifted from the sea ahead. They headed for the thickest part of the line, which would be the bluff below Kusadasi.

Marya saw the sail behind them first, making directly for them.

"She carries enough sail to overtake us easily," said Nikos. He watched the craft steadily reduce the distance between them.

Jacson veered harder on the wind and headed for the nearest shallow water. Still the distance was closing. By the time the features on the mainland looked separate and distinct, the red and gray uniforms of the acolytes were distinguishable in the bows, working around a large laser gun. It was one of the few self-powered outfits still working.

Feeling the steady pressure on the tiller which was all Jacson needed to know that he was holding her into the wind, he watched with the others while the acolytes finished preparing the gun and retreated midship. Their faces could be seen now. With a start, Jacson recognized Janaros propped up on the deck.

A burst of light appeared at the mouth of the gun, followed a split second later by a crash as the mast was severed and dropped to the deck. Pitching with the sudden loss of headway and twisting to the port, sails dragging in the water, the other ship seemed to leap toward them.

"Stephan! Free the dinghy! They can't follow it into the shallow water." Jacson scrambled over the deck to help, tearing the canvas from the cowling where Marya and Tatiana were covered.

With a backward glance he saw

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that the acolytes were already lowering their lighter as the crew prepared to heave to a hundred yards from the crippled caique. They carried small arms. Keeping the caique between them, Jacson pushed off. They wallowed in the heavy swell, pulling for the breakers. When the blue and white lighter rounded the caique, four oars whipping with expert strokes, Jacson watched one of the men stand and take careful aim, a cable from the butt of the gun whiplashing beside him in the wind and pitching boat. The barrel was weaving in small arcs, but stayed on the level of Jacson's chest. He felt a sudden ache in anticipation.

Then the lighter glowed on the water and the men it held burst in a halo of flame; a mist rose and dissipated in the wind. Seconds later the ship was hoisting sail hastily; her anchor broke the surface and the jib bellied. She heeled as the wind caught her. There was a blinding flash, a series of brief flares, and a ghost ship took her place as steam and blew away to the south.

Only Stephan, who had been watching the shoreline ahead, had seen the incandescence at its source on the point of land jutting toward them.

Marya had taken Tatiana's arm while they tried to keep up with what was happening and comforted each other, and they cried out together when they saw the party running on the beach. They lurched and bumped in the breakers, heaved with a last rolling wave, and knifed into the sand on the beach. By the time they had all disembarked, they were surrounded.

XIV

The Turks were all about the same age as the Greeks. They were swarthy and dirty, looking as though they had traveled much and washed little. The members of the band said nothing while they waited for their companions to work their way down the rocky hillside with their heavy equipment. Studying the faces around him, Jacson noted the dark, brooding eyes, and the intelligence indicated by their alertness and awareness. There was something else, too. These men, *like us, have a mission; they are looking for something to change things,* he thought. He hoped that they were looking for solutions to the same problems; they would be good men to be fighting with, not against. He noticed that they were relaxed, but with the assurance and strength to react quickly and effectively.

They passed along the pebbled beach to the north until they reached a ruined castle and skirted it, climbing away from the sea. When the sound of the surf was finally completely cut off by a ridge, they were at the edge of a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

small village. The stones of the surrounding wall were uneven and unmortared, with an occasional glare of polished marble set among the sand-colored boulders. Dust lay thick in the streets, and it hung in thick swirls around their legs when their plodding steps kicked it up. None of the mud brick houses were occupied.

After they wound through several deserted streets, a door was kneed open in a small shed, the leader knocked against the walls and roof, and all the Greeks except Nikos were secured there. The only light came filtering through chinks and cracks, bands of yellow filled with frantic motes.

The blades of light were almost horizontal when the door opened again.

"Geleyorsunuz." The Turk made a gesture with the word. He led them in the rouging afternoon through streets that narrowed as they went along. Food smells mixed in the air with smoke, and voices merged with the small noises in kitchens.

In the tiny square where the street broadened, women drew water into their earthen jugs while several men sat at tables scattered along one side. They stopped, facing a wide, blue door which swung open almost immediately.

"Merhaba." And then in Greek, "Hello. I am Osman. Come in." He made a broad gesture with his hand and stood aside for them to enter. He stood a head taller than the Greeks; his dusky skin tones made his black eyes brilliant and penetrating. He waved the women toward a far corner, smiling at them with a sparkle of white teeth, and lifted an arm to snap his fingers in the air. "Khave!" he shouted, and he straddled a chair facing Jacson and Stephan.

"Now, straight to the point. You were chased by a holy ship. If you were not on their side, you might be on ours. Why were you running?"

Jacson told him.

"Where were you running to?" Osman lifted a cup from the tray placed on the table behind him and told the man who brought it to offer some to the others.

"Anywhere. Away from Xios." Jacson forced himself to hold Osman's gaze.

"Your hodja mentioned Ephesus." He noisily took another sip of coffee.

"Yes."

"May I ask why?"

Jacson told him about the Manual, noting that Nikos had told him as much, apparently.

"But you have no lasguns, no weapons of any kind. Except this." He pointed to the dagger from Jacson's waistband. "Surely you knew that Ephesus is heavily guarded by techpriests from your country."

"No."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Yes. There are doors of metal as thick as two walls. Cannon cover every approach to the doors. There is little cover, and almost no hope of entering."

Jacson thought to himself that there must be a good reason to go there, then said as much. He felt that he should trust Osman.

Osman studied his face for a long time. Then he looked away and his eyes glazed as he told how he had lost his wife five years before to the court near Adana; how he had tried to accept it and go on living his life until despair defeated him—his Feysan had escaped and died with Osman from the treatment she had suffered. In the hills he had met others like himself and together they struck out. But there were some among them who could think, and they started putting things together. If it had started earlier, maybe . . . his voice faded.

He turned back to Jacson. "Do you want to join us, Greek?"

Stephan and Jacson answered at the same time, "Yes."

Osman called out the window. "Mehmet! Bring the hodja."

Now he was pacing. "We had almost given up. I know there is an answer inside those steel doors. We have tortured, bribed, and killed from Adana to Ankara to Antalya—you've seen some of the guns we've gotten—there are not many of them in this country; everything we've crushed out of them, everything we've found points to Ephesus." He smacked a fist into his palm. "Now you give us new hope. But we will have to move quickly."

Nikos apeared in the entrance. He was haggard and limped. Jacson rose, filled with compassion and anger.

"He is an old man! Nikos, what . . ."

"Peace, Jacson. I have proved us trustworthy. It was a small price."

Osman placed both hands on his chest. "I am truly sorry. You understand that we must be extremely cautious."

Jacson swallowed his rage, assured by looks from Nikos, and helped him to a chair. He tried not to notice the marks on his hands and feet.

XV

The river Kuck Menderes meandered like molten silver through the silt-formed plain. Osman and Jacson lay on the crest overlooking the delta; their vista included the mouth of the river, where flat barges carrying the ikons were being towed in, and the peneplain cradling the white marble remains of Ephesus and nearby brown Selcuk. On both sides of the river, small bands of acolytes kept pace with the barges. By noon the entourage should reach the bend closest to Ephesus and the transfer to land transport

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

would be made. Nikos was already hidden in the marshes upstream.

Osman checked the height of the sun. "It is time. Mehmet and I will leave. My men will wait for you to start moving at dusk. *Bismallah!*" The two men threaded their way among the rocks and were soon out of sight.

When the sun reached zenith, Jacson and Stephan shook themselves out of a sodden sleep and climbed to the overlook where several of Osman's men watched the scene in the distance. In the distant crook of the river the barges were lying empty. Not far from the banks, the ikons glinted in the sunlight, moving almost imperceptibly. Just ahead of them, a tiny cloud of dust was raised by the vanguard contingent. Suddenly, the cloud spread and retreated toward the river.

"They must have spotted Nikos drifting." Jacson made a noise of agreement and shaded his eyes. He caught a brief glimpse of a moving speck on the water, angling toward the barges. After the dust cloud spread along the banks and finally settled for a short time, the caravan commenced as before.

"Think they believed him?" Stephan thought aloud.

"Why not? He wears a cassock, speaks Greek; they can see the marks of torture."

They both knew that if they didn't believe him, nothing could be done now anyway. No need to say it.

In the middle of the afternoon there was a flurry of activity on the road toward the marble remains. At least one lasgun had been fired. When the trek started again, however, the placement of men had changed. Some followed the ikons. A mirror flashed from one of the peaks the procession had passed.

"They made it!" Stephan flung out his arms and danced on the hummock. There was general rejoicing, and everyone settled happily under whatever shade they could find and drew chunks of meat from their shirts and out of sacks tied at their waists. A wine skin passed around several times. Teeth made little cracking sounds as they bit into the grit that had sifted into the food.

The air chilled quickly after the sun reached the horizon. Turk and Greek alike shivered as they readied themselves; no fire was built for fear of being seen. Jacson waited until the sounds of activity were replaced by the sounds of men waiting, impatient to start. Then he took a deep breath and called "Tamam!" into the darkness. With as much quiet as forty men could maintain, they moved out in single file.

XVI

In the village, meanwhile, Ta-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tiana and Marya watched while the ritual pyre was being built. A young woman named Afet was explaining in the best Greek she had picked up what it was all about.

"You see, we made a big fire, *bilmiorsunuz?* In the fire we put things we want. Me, I put a house. *Bak.*" She showed them a miniature house of wood and straw; there were many openings for windows. She wanted a big house. Through one of the openings, Marya could see a bundle.

"What have you put in the house?"

"That is the baby I want." She took out a rag and string doll wrapped in male clothing. "*Guzelmeye?* Is he pretty?" They nodded as she made over the doll before putting it back.

"Melina there, whose husband was killed at Adana, wants a new *adam.* She is lonely, *bilmiorsunuz?*" Melina sat at the door of her hut finishing the image of a man. It was about a meter high.

"*Gel.* Come." She went with them closer to the heap of brush. Among the branches were many tiny houses and many more dolls dressed in boys' and girls' clothing. Near the center was a pair of dolls representing adults.

"See, Marya, one among us would like to see her mother and father again. It is difficult, living like nomads."

They moved with Afet away from the stack of brush toward her doorway. She told them to wait while she went inside. A moment later she returned with a sewing basket.

"Here. You still have time. Make your wishes, too."

Their hands were swift. In an hour there were two more puppets among the others. Marya and Tatiana had not had time to learn to hope for much; their dolls were almost exactly alike, except that one was dressed in a blue jacket and the other wore a red shirt blooming at the wrists and waist: Jacson and Stephan would have recognized themselves immediately.

As soon as the night was fully dark, torches were held to the tinder, and when the flames were leaping and playing wild tricks with shadows, the silent figures watching began to chant and feint toward the fire. Finally, the first figure hurtled across the blaze, arms extended in opposite directions. He cleared the pile of burning brush easily. It was the right of the men to go first. He was followed by other old men lunging through the fire, one after another, joining the circle on the other side to watch. Soon the hemisphere of light was being crossed and recrossed in succession as the hopeful women began, their eyes and teeth flashing as they jumped, staring into the dark beyond the halo of heat.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

XVII

The assault on the stronghold at Ephesus went according to plan. Nikos and Osman easily overpowered the small contingent of men inside the complex—most of the troops camped in the open. When Jacson and the others threw their frontal attack, the guards retreated toward the protection of guns mounted in bubbles above the entrance. This was a move of folly and they were cut down from behind and front so quickly that none of the attackers was lost. Mehmet viewed the destroyed emplacements with only half-feigned sadness and regretted that the weapons had been lost with the owners.

The metal corridors and cubicles were a maze under the small mountain. They explored them one by one, finding room after unoccupied room in a seemingly endless sequence. Even though the rooms must have been occupied at one time by hundreds of men, not so much as a chair or a table could be found beyond the first few rooms. The doors must have stood open a long time, for the dust on the floors was thick. Then at the end of a long unlighted corridor Osman reached a dead end where a door should have been.

He located a hairline seam with his fingernail and called the others.

"This must be it, Osman," Jacson said. "All the other doors are open, and the rooms are empty." He scanned the neighboring walls with a torch. "The doors were probably electrically operated. The power is off at this end. Somewhere there is a switch for the door and a generator."

"Start looking. Mehmet and I will work on the metal with a lasgun in the meantime."

They located the power source by following the lines from the jury-rigged lights of the guard station at the entrance. Jacson scrabbled over gravel and scrubby grass up the slope over the installation to the point where the lines disappeared underground. Uncovering a hatch, he forced it and revealed a small room with a four-foot cube humming in the center. He wondered briefly how so small a piece of equipment could supply enough electricity for even the lights which were working and what fuel was running the generator, at the same time verifying that the leads from the lights were indeed attached to clamps on the wall of the enclosure. He found a pair of severed wires which he felt must be the leads to the sector where they had found the closed door and repaired the connection. Not wanting to risk securing the wires while the poles were hot, but unable to locate a cutoff, he bent the stripped copper into clip shapes and pulled them in opposite directions over the threaded

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bolts, stretching the wires tight around nearby box covers.

When he returned to the tunnels, the lights were on, and Osman was cursing tightly in front of the door. He had spent the power pack of one gun trying to cut through, and then the door had simply started sliding back into the wall when the power came on. It was stuck half open because the jagged edges of the laser cut wouldn't clear.

They squeezed into the room. The walls were covered with gauges, dials, clocks, flickering lights; the small space was filled with a racket of humming, clicking and whirring. There seemed no sense to it. Jacson sat in a chair fixed to the floor in front of a panel, a bewildered look on his face. He read the labeling plates, two rows exactly alike except for the last on the left. He read them aloud.

"Pater One. Pater Two."

Pater One was blinking red.

XVIII

Jacson and Stephan settled into the control room. They began separating history and myth the first day. They found the log of the last technicians who had sealed themselves in when the world had begun exhibiting panic, and, finally, total war. A terrible weapon had burned out the "RussChinks" during the first day, followed the next by Greater Europe and Rhodasia, and on the fourth day, North and South American States were scorching. The last entry in the log read, "Four days of it. Now we receive nothing from home or anywhere else. For all we know, there may be no one out there. Our position here is certainly useless now, and no one wants to stay holed up here. Tomorrow we leave this tomb and try to get to the sea; God knows if we'll find life on the islands."

There were other notebooks in languages they couldn't understand. They decided they were glad they couldn't understand.

To their dismay, they found a whole shelf of books like the Manual, all different and larger by twice. The titles mystified them. "The Manual of Integrated Circuits in the Controls." "Manual of Magneto-hydrodynamics; Valves in the Janus." "Manual of Replacement Pot Components." The volume they had known as *the* Manual seemed to be an index to the others and a simplification of essential procedures.

All through the books they found references to Video Tapes. It occurred to Jacson that part of the liturgy contained a reference to these. He looked it up.

"Video Tapes will demonstrate each step to the technicians." Red ink marginalia added, "Trust to the Video." He tried to remember the homilies he had heard based on the statement. It seemed it was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

always concerning words from the Bible, always used in counterpoint to the Manual, the gist of which was, "Who will stand responsible for the law? The people will. And who will stand responsible for the people?" Jacson was never able to make sense out of the quotes, though the extemporized words of the techpriests sometimes were reasonable enough.

Almost in despair of discovering meaning in the clacking room, where the signal "Pater One" ominously blinked red, Stephan stared at a convex glass plate and slapped at the incomprehensible panel. Immediately the screen lit up.

"Jac, come here!"

They watched together in amazement as a full color picture of a girl water-skiing ran through. She was blonde and had an athlete's build. Neither of them had ever seen anyone like her. How the craft pulling her so swiftly over the water moved itself they were at a loss to understand. Then it was over.

Near Stephan's hand there was a click, followed by a high-pitched whine and a final thunk. The screen went blank. An indicator read "Reload", as a metal hatch popped up.

"What marvels these men made," commented Jacson. He reached into the well and removed the tapepak, turning it over in his hand. "I saw more of these." He went to a steel cabinet and selected another pak. Returning to the panel, he turned the tapepak around until it dropped into place. Snapping the hatch shut, he located a "Play" button and pressed.

They drew back, astonished.

There was an ikon mounted in a framework like that one outside. A voice was making a commentary they didn't hear as they watched the ikon exploding into flames near the ground. It slowly lifted and the camera watched it out of sight.

It suddenly dawned on Jacson where the traditional hurry-up phrase must have originated: blastoff.

By the fourth day it was clear what had to be done.

By going back to passages in the Manual, they discovered that (Section V-ii) ". . . if either Pater should go condition Red, or if contact is lost through communication failure, the destruct signal will be activated. Failure to destruct will be indicated on the Panel B Tracer. In this event, the missile will properly armed (see Section IX-xvii) and they shall home in and destruct. Any Center may follow these procedures."

For the three centuries since the war, the birth control satellites had continued in their orbits. Once in five years they had automatically shut off to permit conception. For

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

most of that period, the rockets had been carted to and from the religious festivals, first as a reminder of the coalition of priests and technicians to preserve what was left of humanity, then as no more than religious artifacts. Probably even the techpriests had forgotten what the missiles were for.

Now Pater One was condition Red.

To learn the procedure to destruct, Jacson moved from the general outline of the Pater Satellite Project, which he now understood somewhat, to the technical tapes. These were indexed under Non-Technicians' Instructions for Overhaul of Components, Maintenance of Control Facilities, and Satellite Malfunction.

Tapepak One: Emergency, Non-Techs. To determine radio communication status of satellites.

Tapepak Two: When radio contact is viable, self-destruct method or: Event no radio, or self-destruct not operational, Missile Tracking. Continue Tapepaks 3,4,5.

Tapepak Three: Missile overhaul and check-out. Key-in for circuit test-through, crowbar technicals, retrieving replacement parts.

Tapepak Four: Mounting for blastoff.

Tapepak Five: Guidance systems. "Target achieved" verification.

Following the detailed instructions shown on Tapepak One, Jacson helped in trying to raise Pater One. *Identify* signals were sent, and he and Stephan watched the board for answering codes.

"The code will feed out in five-second bursts at intervals of five minutes." Stephan put the germanium plaque in the transmitter.

"For how long is it? Five hours, right? Then we'll know if we have to plow through these other tapes." Both of them were surprised at the ease with which they learned to handle the devices.

At the end of the test period, the printout stated that Pater One's radio was inoperable. The self-destruct mechanism was therefore useless. They proceeded to the second part of Tapepak Two.

There they learned how to check out the radar screens, the way to lock in the tracking beams and receive continuous reports on trajectories. By the end of the tape, they were finally convinced emotionally that there was an object 22,000 miles above the Earth. And they were convinced that it was possible for this object to prevent children through radiation coded to prevent the proper hormone balance for pregnancy.

In one day they moved from intellectually believing that there was Something that kept children from them, to *knowing* emotionally that people and machines could be controlled over vast distances.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

To explain this to their fellows was difficult, but their own certainty carried weight enough for them to have the confidence of the Turks.

Osman was busy preparing a plan to deal with the acolytes who must eventually follow the trail of the missing Greeks who had accompanied the ikons to Ephesus. He had scouts staked along the coast and the Menderes River. He encouraged Jacson to work quickly.

If what they were learning was difficult to grasp on any but a pragmatic basis of this dial, that circuit, their determination was nevertheless more than enough to keep them at it twenty hours a day. Feverishly, laboriously, they dismantled the control sections of one of the rockets, cleaning the molded fuel-control plates, checking out the photocircuits under Magnify and Compare consoles, replacing faulty components from duplication banks. The guidance system was one twenty kilogram unit, all integrated circuits, potted and encapsulated in epoxy.

The access plates on the missile were practically invisible. They were magnetically polarized, and until the release sheet was pressed over them, the seams were molecularly bonded.

Sealed containers of heavy fuel were locked in, and tested out volatile on the boards.

Then, while Jacson set up the launching controls, feeding the silicon tapes into readout slots for testing, Stephan led the Turks in improvising hoists for the missile. The lifting cranes and holding girders of the launch pad were ruined, collapsed into a weathered heap of twisted and air-eaten metal.

With block and tackle from the hauling carts, the missile was pulled into a vertical position on the flat marble roadway in front of Hadrian's Temple. The three flanges at its foot were designed to give enough tube clearance. Using salvaged beams and chunks of broken pillars and cut stone, a one-shot silo was constructed around it.

When the work was nearly done, the construction looked like a mosque and steel minaret amid the ruins of the Roman city. The arched vents at the base of the structure could be tiny doors.

On the ninth day, the last stones were wedged into place at the lip of the silo. Stanchions were inserted to hold the missile at true perpendicular.

On the tenth day, the readings showed that all the systems were ready in the console. All that remained was to couple with the tracking monitor and course corrector.

And on that same tenth day, Mehmet foundered on Osman's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

shoulder in the blinding sunlight, out of breath.

"Osman! Acolytes. On the way."

Muscles stiffening, Osman snorted, "Where are they?"

"Entering the river's mouth in small boats. They could be here by noon, if they disembark and cut across the flats."

Stephan was already pulling away with Jacson, calling over his shoulder. "We've got to get this thing up. They're all yours." They disappeared among the debris and fluted pillars.

Mehmet was hoarse from running, leaning on his friend's shoulder, as much to balance himself as to gather courage from his companion.

"They got tired of waiting for the returning retinue, I guess. We expected them sooner or later."

Biting the inside of his thumbnail, Osman combed the countryside with his eyes as though inspecting established fortifications.

"We need cannon there, two men with hand lasers there, by the overhang. We'll be able to keep them back a few hours, perhaps."

He had worked out a dozen different defense plans, partly to ward off the boredom of waiting for something he could handle, partly because he didn't know what kind of detachment would be coming and he wanted to have something in mind for several possibilities. Apparently the priests on Xios did not suspect that anything serious could have gone wrong. No one else had even approached Ephesus before.

"Let's get things going. Send out a few men to keep the acolytes in their sights. If any of them show signs of spreading or circling us, scare them enough to head them toward home here."

They loped away from each other as Mehmet went to set up the pickets and Osman waved his men to him; they came away from their loitering expectantly, eager for action.

By eleven o'clock, a tiny cloud of dust was visible from the mound above Ephesus. Osman and Mehmet watched with eyes shaded from the sun.

"My friend," Mehmet was saying, "the thing that I can't understand is the reason for these machines." He pulled a twig from the bush at his knee and sucked at it in his teeth. "But who could imagine a world with too many people? Here it's a rare thing to see anyone at all."

"You must go with me later to see the dead cities. There are so many houses that the Greeks could leave their islands and go into the streets looking for homes. They would not see each other for days."

"Then it's even more perplexing. What could have killed so many? And where are the victors, if it indeed was a war? I

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

can't visualize anything so great and terrible. Clouds of confusion fill my head when I try."

As one man they turned toward the approaching columns. Another hour and it would begin. Already the acolytes were double-timing through the dust. Mehmet threw his chewing twig, and they jogged together back down the rise.

During the morning a funnel-like defense row had been made. Close to the launching pad, a hundred meters to either side, two bunkers had been thrown up. In the direction of the river flats, some three hundred meters farther, another pair of defenses were laid, wider than the first two. Still farther on, separated by five hundred meters of open ground, two larger emplacements were set up, manned by a dozen men each. The idea was to force the acolytes closer and closer together as they approached the launching site.

When the acolytes entered the open end of the funnel and crossed the entrance posts, a party flanking them to the rear opened fire. They scattered momentarily, wavering in toward the underground headquarters. It was obvious that they were taken by surprise.

"Mehmet!" Osman called. "Give the signal for the squeeze to begin."

"Done! You can see the holies being cut down from the sides. They can't have seen much fighting for a while. They walk right into it."

"Now they should try to make a fast pull toward their little sanctuary. Get ready to signal the next bunch."

About twenty of the black and white uniforms trapped in the valley started a sprint for the entrance to the stronghold. The others lay or kneeled in the dust, shooting lasguns in three directions, trying to provide cover for the racing men. Three of the runners fell and did not get up; the rest fell into cover and offered screening fire for the rearguard to catch up. Again several were cut down among the crouching sprinters. By now the inner guns had been passed, and they opened fire, pitching the diminished party into panic. A few fired as they made a last mad dash, half turning as they did so; the rest scrambled on their bellies and elbows to the nearest outcropping of rock or brush, not knowing which way was clear. When the first of the men approached the final fifty meters, Osman could see their wide eyes and fear-stricken faces. Then he and the emplacement opposite him opened fire, and the last flicker of hope vanished from their faces and they fired wildly. The last acolytes who had made it through the gauntlet began crowding near the launch pad.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Cease firing!" bellowed Osman. The intermittent buzzes stopped. In the absolute stillness of the afternoon, the winded acolytes hugged the flinty earth and huddled closer to the pads, taking advantage of the respite.

"Stalemate. Soon they'll figure that we don't want to hit their ikons. See if you can hurry Stephan and Jac."

Mehmet leaped and rolled down the shard-covered incline. Soon he was ducking and darting among pillars and blocks of marble.

The heat hung in the air like something tangible. Only the distant braying of a donkey like a machine losing momentum broke the silence. Osman rolled onto his back and watched the rare cloud drifting slowly over him and listened for signs of movement. Loose gravel clattered to his left and he laid the gun in the crook of his arm, pointed toward the noise. In the quiet he could hear the catch-catch of feet trying to make holds in the bank. Then the harsh sound of breathing came over the edge; he readied his finger on the trip, eyes resting calmly on the point where the figure would emerge.

Jacson's head topped the wall and he flinched when he saw the open end of the tube locked squarely on the bridge of his nose.

"Sorry, friend. I didn't expect you." Osman lowered his gun and glanced quickly over the edge. "I met Mehmet on the way. I told him that Stephan was almost ready to launch. He's going to stall the acolytes a little longer if necessary."

"It shouldn't be too difficult to keep them where they are. They're afraid to move." Osman snorted contemptuously.

The scene below was still quiet. A few of the acolytes had their heads together. Soon a pair of them started to move out, trying to keep the missiles between them and the gunners. They had covered about fifteen or twenty meters when Mehmet, screaming a blood-curdling yell, appeared above them, firing crazily and weaving through the ruins. Racing directly toward the foremost man, he leaped and his boot was about to crush the head raised in surprise when a bolt from his left toppled him.

It happened before Jacson or Osman could move. Then Osman was groaning and flew into the open air. He scattered bursts over the acolytes, forcing them to grind their faces into the soil. He was still making the air sizzle when the blinding flash came from the pad and a steady roar began, climbing in pitch and intensity. Jacson tackled him and pushed his face into the ground. A hot wind blew for long minutes over them until the roar settled into a drone and diminished. When they looked up into the glaring sky,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they saw the needle shape tilted forty-five degrees, piercing a low-flying cloud. The noise dimmed, and they watched the pinpoint of light until it, too, was gone.

Clusters of Turks wearily stumped their way in S curves toward the black circle burned around the launch pad. Among the boulders they found the remains of twenty-one Greeks and one Turk. After futile attempts to move Mehmet, they formed a brigade, as slow and solemn as a dirge, and covered him with stones and chunks of marble.

That night they built a fire and cooked shish kebab. There was a lot of laughter and loud talking after Stephan announced to them that the missile had found its target. Only Osman, sitting by himself away from the fire was not infected by the gaiety. It would take much time for him to forget Mehmet; friends are made by time only, and brothers are born out of many trials.

As the fire died, Jacson sat with the others while they planned the return to the village, hope glowing from all the faces. The circle of warmth grew smaller and smaller, and the men withdrew into their separate thoughts. Jacson began dreaming before sleep about Marya. She was more beautiful in his mind than before. He lay back and stared up at the brilliant points shimmering above and worked out of several of the brighter ones an outline of her face, diadems in her hair.

(FILMS, *from p.* 53)

The weakest thing in the film for me, visually as well as structurally, was the triumph of the "Matmos"—a lake of living evil that rises to engulf the city of sin where Barbarella has gone to rescue an Earth Scientist who has invented a "posatronic ray." But, on reflection, how could the Black Queen's chamber of dreams—the sequence preceding the catastrophe—have been topped? I think the film would have been a little stronger if the words "good" and "evil" had been left out of the script. The film is not about "good" and "evil" but rather the comic and horrific intensity inherent in its own opulent imagery.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SCIENCE

UNCERTAIN, COY, AND HARD TO PLEASE

by Isaac Asimov

WHAT WITH ONE THING AND ANOTHER, I have been doing a good deal of reading of Shakespeare lately*, and I've noticed a great many things, including the following: Shakespeare's romantic heroines are usually much superior to his heroes in intelligence, character and moral strength.

Juliet takes strenuous and dangerous action where Romeo merely throws himself on the ground and weeps ("Romeo and Juliet"); Portia plays a difficult and active role where Bassanio can only stand on the sidelines and wring his hands ("Merchant of Venice"); Benedick is a quick-witted fellow, but he isn't a match for Beatrice ("Much Ado About Nothing"). Nor is Berowne a match for Rosaline ("Love's Labor's Lost") or Orlando a match for Rosalind ("As You Like It"). In some cases, it isn't even close. Julia is infinitely superior in every way to Proteus ("Two Gentlemen of Verona") and Helena to Bertram ("All's Well That Ends Well").

The only play in which Shakespeare seems to fall prey to male chauvinism is "The Taming of the Shrew," and a good case can be made out for something more subtle than merely a strong man beating down a strong woman—but I won't bother you about that here.

Yet, despite all this, I never hear of anyone objecting to Shakespeare on the ground that he presents women inaccurately. I have never

* *Because I'm writing a book on the subject, that's why.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

heard anyone say, "Shakespeare is all right but he doesn't understand women." On the contrary, I hear nothing but praise for his heroines.

Shakespeare—who, by common consent, has caught the human race at its truest and most naked under the probing and impersonal light of his genius—tells us women are, if anything, the superior of men in all that counts. How is it, then, that so many of us nevertheless remain certain that women are inferior to men. I say "us" without qualification because women, by and large, accept their own inferiority.

You may wonder why this matter concerns me or this magazine. Well, it concerns me (to put it most simply) because everything concerns me. It concerns this magazine because science fiction involves future societies, and these, I hope, will be more rational in their treatment of 51 percent of the human race than our present society is.

It is my belief that future societies *will* be more rational in this respect, and I want to explain my reasons for this belief. I would like to speculate about Woman in the future, in the light of what has happened to Woman in the past and what is happening to Woman in the present.

To begin with, let's admit there are certain ineradicable physiological differences between men and women. (First one to yell "Vive la différence!" leaves the room.)

But are there any differences that are primarily non-physiological? Are there intellectual, temperamental, emotional differences that you are *sure* of and that will serve to differentiate women from men in a broad, general way? I mean differences that will hold for all cultures, as the physiological differences do, and differences that are not the result of early training.

For instance, I am not impressed by the "Women are more refined" bit, since we all know that mothers begin very early in the game to slap little hands and say, "No, no, no, nice little girls don't do that."

I, myself, take the rigid position that we can never be sure about cultural influences and that the only safe distinctions we can make between the sexes are the physiological ones. Of these, I recognize two:

1—Most men are physically larger and physically stronger than most women.

2—Women get pregnant, bear babies, and suckle them. Men don't.

What can we deduce from these two differences *alone*? It seems to me that this is enough to put women at a clear disadvantage with respect to men in a primitive hunting society, which is all there was prior to, say, 10,000 B.C.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Women, after all, would be not quite as capable at the rougher aspects of hunting and would be further handicapped by a certain ungainliness during pregnancy as well as distractions while taking care of infants. In a catch-as-catch-can jostle for food, she would come up at the rear every time.

It would be convenient for a woman to have some man see to it that she was thrown a haunch after the hunting was over and then see to it, further, that some other man didn't take it away from her. A primitive hunter would scarcely do this out of humanitarian philosophy; he would have to be bribed into it. I suppose you're all ahead of me in guessing that the obvious bribe is sex.

I visualize a Stone Age treaty of mutual assistance between Man and Woman—sex-for-food—and as a result of this kind of togetherness, chidren are reared and the generations continue.

I don't see that any of the nobler passions can possibly have had anything to do with this. I doubt that anything we would recognize as "love" was present in the Stone Age, for romantic love seems to have been a rather late invention and to be anything but widespread even today. (I once read that the Hollywood-notion of romantic love was invented by the medieval Arabs and was spread to our own western society by the Provençal troubadours.)

As for the concern of a father for his children, forget it. There seem definite indications that men did not really understand the connection between sexual intercourse and children until nearly historic times. Mother-love may have its basis in physiology (the pleasure of suckling, for instance), but I strongly suspect that father-love, however real it may be, is cultural in origin.

Although the arrangement of sex-for-food seems a pretty reasonable *quid-pro-quo*, it isn't. It is a terribly unfair arrangement, because one side can break the agreement with impunity and the other cannot. If a woman punishes by withholding sex and a man by withholding food, which side will win out? "Lysistrata" to the contrary, a week without sex is a lot easier than a week without food. Furthermore, a man who tires of this mutual strike can take what he wants by force; a woman can't.

It seems to me, then, that for definite physiological reasons, the original association of men and women was a strictly unequal one, with man in the role of master and woman in the role of slave.

This is not to say that a clever woman, even in Stone Age times, might not have managed to wheedle and cajole a man into letting her

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have her own way. And we all know that this is certainly true nowadays, but wheedling and cajolery are slave-weapons. If you, Proud Reader, are a man and don't see this, I would suggest you try to wheedle and cajole your boss into giving you a raise, or wheedle and cajole a friend into letting you have your way, and see what happens to your self-respect.

In any master-slave relationship, the master does only that portion of the work that he likes to do or that the slave cannot do; all else is reserved for the slave. It is indeed frozen into the slaves' duties not only by custom but by stern social law that defines slaves' work as unfit for free men to do.

Suppose we divide work into "big-muscle" and "little-muscle." Man would do the "big-muscle" work because he would have to, and the women would then do the "little-muscle" work. Let's face it; this is usually (not always) a good deal for men because there is far more "little-muscle" work to do. ("Men work from sun to sun; women's work is never done" the old saying goes.)

Sometimes, in fact, there is no "big-muscle" work to do at all. In that case the Indian brave sits around and watches the squaw work—a situation that is true for many non-Indian braves, who sit and watch their non-Indian squaws work.* Their excuse is, of course, that as proud and gorgeous males they can scarcely be expected to do "women's work."

The social apparatus of man-master and woman-slave was carried right into the most admired cultures of antiquity and was never questioned there. To the Athenians of the Golden Age, women were inferior creatures, only dubiously superior to domestic animals, and with nothing in the way of human rights. To the cultivated Athenian, it seemed virtually self-evident that male homosexuality was the highest form of love, since that was the only way in which a human being (male, that is) could love an equal. Of course, if he wanted children, he had to turn to a woman, but so what; if he wanted transportation, he turned to his horse.

As for that other great culture of the past, the Hebrew, it is quite obvious that the Bible accepts male-superiority as a matter of course. It is not even a subject for discussion at any point.

In fact, by introducing the story of Adam and Eve, it has done more

Of course, if they are too chivalrous to watch a woman do all the work, they can always close their eyes. That will even give them a chance to sleep.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for woman's misery than any other book in history. The tale has enabled dozens of generations of men to blame everything on women. It has made it possible for a great many Holy Men of the past to speak of women in terms that a miserable sinner like myself would hesitate to use in referring to mad dogs.

In the ten commandments themselves, women are casually lumped with other forms of property, animate and inanimate. It says, in Exodus 20:17 "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbours."

Nor is the New Testament any better. There are a number of quotations I can choose from, but I will give you this one from Ephesians 5:22-24: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing."

This seems to me to aspire to a change in the social arrangement of man/woman from master/slave to God/creature.

I don't deny that there are many passages in both the Old and New Testaments that praise and dignify womankind. (For example, there is the Book of Ruth.) The trouble is, though, that in the social history of our species, those passages of the Bible that taught feminine wickedness and inferiority were by far the more influential. To the self-interest that led men to tighten the chains about women was added the most formidable of religious injunctions.

The situation has not utterly changed in its essence, even now. Women have attained a certain equality before the law—but only in our own century, even here in the United States. Think how shameful it is that no woman, however intelligent and educated, could vote in a national election until 1920—despite the fact that the vote was freely granted to every drunkard and moron, provided only that he happened to be male.

Yet even so—though women can vote, and hold property, and even own their own bodies—all the social apparatus of inferiority remains.

Any man can tell you that a woman is intuitive rather than logical; emotional rather than reasonable; finicky rather than creative; refined rather than vigorous. They don't understand politics, can't add a column of figures, drive cars poorly, shriek with terror at mice and so on and so on and so on.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Because women are all these things, how can they be allowed an equal share with men in the important tasks of running industry, government, society?

Such an attitude is self-fulfilling, too.

We begin by teaching a young man that he is superior to young women, and this is comforting for him. He is automatically in the top half of the human race, whatever his shortcomings may be. Anything that tends to disturb this notion threatens not only his personal self-respect but his very virility.

This means that if a woman happens to be more intelligent than a particular man in whom she is (for some arcane reason) interested, she must never, for her very life, reveal the fact. No sexual attraction can then overcome the mortal injury he receives in the very seat and core of his masculine pride, and she loses him.

On the other hand, there is something infinitely relieving to a man in the sight of a woman who is manifestly inferior to himself. It is for that reason that a silly woman seems "cute." The more pronouncedly male-chauvinistic a society, the more highly valued is silliness in a woman.

Through long centuries, women have had to somehow interest men if they were to achieve any economic security and social status at all, and those who were not stupid and silly by nature had to carefully cultivate such stupidity and silliness until it came naturally and they forgot they ever were intelligent.

It is my feeling that all the emotional and temperamental distinctions between men and women are of cultural origin, and that they serve the important function of maintaining the man/woman master/slave arrangement.

It seems to me that any clear look at social history shows this and shows, moreover, that the feminine "temperament" jumps through hoops whenever that is necessary to suit man's convenience.

What was ever more feminine than Victorian womanhood, with its delicacy and modesty, its blushes and catchings of breath, its incredible refinement and its constant need for the smelling-salts to overcome a deplorable tendency to faint? Was there ever a sillier toy than the stereotype of the Victorian woman; ever a greater insult to the dignity of Homo sapiens?

But you can see why the Victorian woman (or a rough approximation of her) had to exist in the late 19th Century. It was a time when among the upper classes, there was no "little-muscle" work for her to do since servants did it. The alternative was to let her use her spare

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

time in joining men in their work, or to have her do nothing. Firmly, men had her do nothing (except for such make-work nothings as embroidery and hack-piano-playing). Women were even encouraged to wear clothes that hampered their physical movements to the point where they could scarcely walk or breathe.

What was left to them, then, but a kind of ferocious boredom that brought out the worst aspects of the human temperament and made them so unfit an object, even for sex, that they were carefully taught that sex was dirty and evil so that their husbands could go elsewhere for their pleasures.

But in this very same era, no one ever thought of applying the same toy-dog characteristics to the women of the lower classes. There was plenty of "little-muscle" work for them to do, and since they had no time for fainting and refinement, the feminine temperament made the necessary adjustment, and they did without either fainting or refinement.

The pioneer women of the American West not only cleaned house, cooked, and bore baby after baby, but they grabbed up rifles to fight off Indians when necessary. I strongly suspect they were also hitched to the plow on such occasions as the horse needed a rest, or the tractor was being polished.—And this was in Victorian times.

We see it all about us even now. It's an article of faith that women just aren't any good at even the simplest arithmetic. You know how those cute little dears can't balance a checkbook. When I was a kid, all bank-tellers were male for that very reason. But then it got hard to hire male bank-tellers. Now 90 percent of them are female, and apparently they can add up figures and balance checkbooks after all.

At one time all nurses were males because everyone knew that women were simply too delicate and refined for such work. When the economic necessities made it important to hire females as nurses, it turned out they weren't all that delicate and refined after all. (Now nursing is "woman's work" that a proud man wouldn't do.)

Doctors and engineers are almost always men—until some sort of social or economic crunch comes—and then the female temperament makes the necessary change, and, as in the Soviet Union, women become doctors and engineers in great numbers.

What it amounts to is best expressed in a well-known verse by Sir Walter Scott:

O woman! in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
. . .

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou!

Most women seem to think this is a very touching and wonderful tribute to them, but I think that it is a rather bald exhibition of the fact that when man is relaxing he wants a toy and when he is in trouble he wants a slave, and woman is on instant call for either role.

What if pain and anguish wring *her* brow? Who's *her* ministering angel? Why, another woman who is hired for the occasion.

But let's not slip to the other extreme either. During the fight for women's votes, the male chauvinists said that this would wreck the nation since women had no feeling for politics and would merely be manipulated by their men-folks (or by their priests, or by any political quack with a scalp-ful of curls and a mouth-ful of teeth).

Feminists, on the other hand, said that when women brought their gentleness and refinement and honesty to the polling booth, all graft, corruption and war would be brought to an end.

You know what happened when women got the vote? *Nothing.* It turned out that women were no more stupid than men—and no wiser, either.

What of the future? Will women gain true equality?

Not if basic conditions continue as they have ever since Homo sapiens became a species. Men won't voluntarily give up their advantage. Masters never do. Sometimes they are forced to do so by violent revolution of one sort or another. Sometimes they are forced to do so by their wise foresight of a coming violent revolution.

An *individual* may give up an advantage out of a mere sense of decency, but such are always in the minority, and a group as a whole never does.

Indeed, in the present case, the strongest proponents of the status quo are the women themselves (at least most of them). They have played the role so long they would feel chills about the wrists and ankles if the chains were struck off. And they have grown so used to the petty rewards (the tipped hat, the offered elbow, the smirk and leer, and, most of all, the permission to be silly) that they won't exchange them for freedom. Who is hardest on the independent-minded woman who defies the slave-conventions? Other women, of course, playing the fink on behalf of men.

Yet things will change even so, because the basic conditions that underlie woman's historic position are changing.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What was the first essssential difference between men and women?

1) Most men are physically larger and physically stronger than most women.

So? What of that today? Rape is a crime, and so is physical mayhem even when only directed against women. That doesn't stop such practices altogether, but it does keep them from being the universal masculine game they once were.

And does it matter that men are larger and stronger, in the economic sense? Is a woman too small and weak to earn a living? Does she have to crawl into the protecting neck-clutch of a male, however stupid or distasteful he may be, for the equivalent of the haunch of the kill?

Nonsense! "Big-muscle" jobs are steadily disappearing, and only "little-muscle" jobs are left. We don't dig ditches any more, we push buttons and let machines dig ditches. The world is being computerized, and there is nothing a man can do in the way of pushing paper, sorting cards, and twiddling contacts, that a woman can't do just as well.

In fact, littleness may be at a premium. Smaller and slenderer fingers may be just what is wanted.

More and more, women will learn they need only offer sex-for-sex and love-for-love, and nevermore sex-for-food. I can think of nothing that will dignify sex more than this change, or more quickly do away with the degrading master/slave existence of "the double standard."

But how about the second difference:

2) Women get pregnant, bear babies, and suckle them. Men don't.

I frequently hear that women have a "nest-building" instinct, that they really *want* to take care of a man and immolate themselves for his sake. —Maybe so, under conditions as they used to be. But how about now?

With the population explosion becoming more and more of a cliff-hanger for all mankind, we will, before the end of the century, have evolved a new attitude toward babies or our culture will die.

It will become perfectly all right for a woman not to have babies. The stifling social pressure to become a "wife and mother" will lift, and that will mean even more than the lifting of the economic pressure. Thanks to the pill, the burden of babies can be lifted without the abandonment of sex.

This doesn't mean women *won't* have babies; it means merely they won't *have* to have babies.

In fact, I feel that female slavery and the population explosion go hand in hand. Keep a woman in subjection and the only way a man will feel safe is to keep her "barefoot and pregnant." If she has nothing

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to do except undignified and repetitive labor, a woman will want baby after baby as the only escape to something else.

On the other hand, make women truly free and the population explosion will stop of its own accord. Few women would want to sacrifice their freedom for the sake of numerous babies. And don't say "No" too quickly; feminine freedom has never been truly tried, but it must be significant that the birth rate is highest where the social position of women is lowest.

In the 21st Century, then, I predict that women will be completely free for the first time in the history of the species.

Nor am I afraid of the counter-prediction that all things go in cycles and that the clearly visible trend toward feminine emancipation will give way to a swing back to a kind of neo-Victorianism.

Effects can be cyclic, yes—but only if causes are cyclic, and the basic causes here are non-cyclic, barring world-wide thermonuclear war.

In order for the pendulum to swing back toward feminine slavery, there would have to be an increase in "big-muscle jobs" that only men could do. Women must begin once more to fear starvation without a man to work for them. Well, do you think the present trend toward computerization and social security will reverse itself short of global catastrophe? Honestly?

In order for the pendulum to swing back, there would have to be a continuation of the desire for large families and lots of children. There's no other way to keep women contented with their slavery on a large scale (or too busy to think about it, which amounts to the same thing). Given our present population explosion and the situation as it will be by 2000, do you honestly expect women to be put to work breeding baby after baby?

So the trend toward woman's freedom is irreversible.

There's the beginning of it right now, and it is well established. Do you think that the present era of sexual-permissiveness (almost everywhere in the world) is just a temporary breakdown in our moral fiber and that a little government action will restore the stern virtues of our ancestors?

Don't you believe it. Sex has been divorced from babies, and it will continue to be so, since sex can't possibly be suppressed and babies can't possibly be encouraged. Vote for whom you please, but the "sexual revolution" will continue.

Or take even something so apparently trivial as the new fad of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hairiness in man. (I've just grown a pair of absolutely magnificent sideburns myself.) Sure, it will change in details, but what it really stands for is the breakdown of trivial distinctions between the sexes.

It is indeed this which disturbs the conventional. Over and over, I hear them complain that some particular long-haired boy looks just like a girl. And then they go on to say, "You can't tell them apart any more!"

This always makes me wonder why it is so important to tell a boy from a girl at a glance, unless one has some personal object in view where the sex makes a difference. You can't tell at a glance whether a particular person is Catholic, Protestant or Jew; whether he/she is a piano-player or a poker-player, an engineer or an artist, intelligent or stupid.

After all, if it were *really* important to tell the sexes apart at the distance of several blocks with one quick glance, why not make use of Nature's distinction? That is *not* long hair since both sexes in all cultures grow hair of approximately equal length. On the other hand, men always have more facial hair than women; the difference is sometimes extreme. (My wife, poor thing, couldn't grow sideburns even if she tried.)

Well, then, should all men grow beards? Yet the very conventionals who object to long hair on a man, also object to beards. *Any* change unsettles them, so when change becomes necessary, conventionals must be ignored.

But *why* this fetish of short hair for men and long hair for women, or, for that matter, pants for men and skirts for women, shirts for men and blouses for women? Why a set of artificial distinctions to exaggerate the natural ones; why the sense of disturbance when the distinctions are blurred?

Can it be that the loud and gaudy distinction of dress and hair between the two sexes is another sign of the master-slave relationship? No master wants to be mistaken for a slave at any distance, or have a slave mistaken for a master, either. In slave societies, slaves are always carefully distinguished (by a pigtail when the Manchus ruled China, by a yellow Star of David when the Nazis ruled Germany, and so on). We ourselves tend to forget this, since our most conspicuous non-female slaves had a distinctive skin-color and required very little else to mark them.

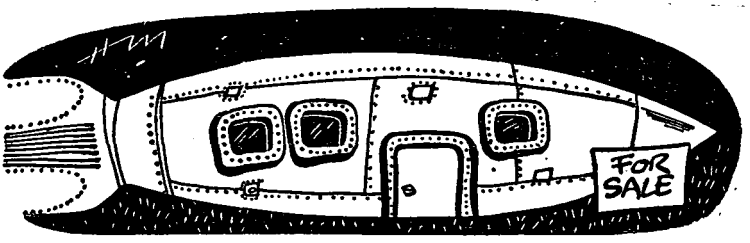
In the society of sexual equality that is coming, then, there will be a blurring of artificial distinctions between the sexes, a blurring that is already on the way. But so what? A particular boy will know who his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

particular girl is and vice versa, and if someone else is not part of the relationship what does he/she care which is which?

I say we can't beat the trend, and we should therefore join it. I say it may even be the most wonderful thing that has ever happened to mankind.

I think the Greeks *were* right in a way, and that it *is* much better to love an equal. And if that be so, why not hasten the time when we heterosexuals can have love at its best?



CHANGING YOUR ADDRESS?

The Magazine of FANTASY and SCIENCE FICTION will follow you anywhere providing you let us know six weeks in advance. Please be sure to give us your old address as well as the new one, and be sure to add the ZIP number. (If convenient, send the address label from the wrapper of the next copy of F&SF you receive.)

MERCURY PUBLICATIONS
Subscription Service
P.O. Box 271
Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This story is about a soldier and the "regiment leaves at dawn" syndrome, in which all soldiers on the brink of shipping out dream of one last extraordinary experience, a romantic adventure to carry in memory. It is an elusive thing, this experience that will somehow balance or sweeten the pain of war, and it comes only to a lucky few.

AFTER ALL THE DREAMING ENDS

by Gary Jennings

THIS MORNING AN ANCIENT, ramshackle automobile came creeping down the long slope of Sandy Hill Road, leading a train of honking drivers who were unable to pass it on the narrow blacktop. It followed the hill road on into Central Avenue and snail-gaited down through town, still with its frustrated motorcade in tow, until it trundled slowly to a halt in the very middle of the crossing at Central and River, our town's busiest intersection. It sat there for a minute or so, amid a growing profanity of horns, just long enough to jell traffic into a solid jam. Then it collapsed suddenly, with a tinny crash, into a heap of junk, rust, dust and rubbish. There was nobody inside.

Being the town newspaper's reporter I got there as soon as the police did, and helped them examine the remains. The radiator medallion, one of the few pieces to survive intact, bore the two superimposed R's that anybody recognizes—Rolls-Royce—but not even old Mr. Amos, owner of Amos's Garage and our local expert, could swear to its vintage.

"Family named Bascom, up on the hill, *used* to have a Rolls," he said. "Oh, years and years ago. Changed a tire on her once, I did. She was beautiful."

Sgt. Rutherford remembered the old Bascom place; I went up there with him in the prowl car. The estate had probably been elegant once, and quite a fitting

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

place for a Rolls-Royce. But it has been unoccupied for longer than anyone can recall; the house is desolate, decayed and popularly considered a likely place for "ha'nts." But we did find a garage on the property and evidence that there had been a car in it, unsuspected, all these years.

The discovery didn't require a Sherlock Holmes. This is December; the whole state of Virginia is under a blanket of snow, and at the Bascom place, that blanket is undisturbed except for the tire tracks that lead from the gaping garage doors down the driveway that merges into Sandy Hill Road. But why or how the car got budged, even Sherlock couldn't say. Except for mine and the policeman's, there is not a single footprint in all that expanse of snow. We shrugged at each other, I got a quote from him to the effect that "investigations are proceeding" and went to the office to write up the story.

I have it in front of me at this moment; editor Finn Godfrey coyly headlined it MYSTERY ROLLS ROLLS INTO MISCHIEF. It's on page one, datelined December 18, 1969, with my photo of Officer Avers directing traffic around the pile of junk. And now I notice that Godfrey also used the story as a lead-in for his editorial. He lays the "prank" to teenagers and fulminates at some length about the misdirected ingenuities of the younger generation.

But you're wrong, boss. This was the doing of an older generation, and it was not mischievously intended. I didn't put into my news story everything I surmise about that Rolls-Royce; because the story actually began a long, long time ago—when your reporter was still in diapers.

"She was beautiful," my Uncle Matt often told me—the same words old Mr. Amos used—but Matt wasn't referring to the Rolls-Royce. The car was already elderly and somewhat decrepit when he first saw it, and what the driver was doing to it on that occasion wasn't about to improve it any.

Matt was standing in the twilight at a crossroads on Sandy Hill, wearing his best-pressed Class-A uniform and leaning against his duffel bag, when he saw the headlights. Private cars were infrequent on the roads at that time—the middle of World War II, when gas rationing was at its strictest—and these headlamps were immense, so at first he thought they belonged to a truck. He stuck out his thumb and the powerful glare bathed him when the vehicle was still a good distance off, so the driver had plenty of time to see him. But the lamps came hurtling on without slowing down, and Matt

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dropped his arm. At that instant, something behind the lamps went "*pow!*" and they swerved to come right at him.

Matt's leap was performed in a split second, but even so he had time to give rueful thanks to the U. S. Army for having tuned up his reflexes. The vehicle swooped across the shoulder where he'd just been standing, then wrenched itself back onto the road. From his now prone position in the weeds, Matt could see that it was a car, an almighty big one. Its red taillights flared brighter as the driver foolishly stomped on full brakes; Matt shook his head in disapproval. The taillights careened crazily away from him, slewed across the blacktop, then off onto the far shoulder. There, with another violent noise, the lights stopped abruptly and went out.

Matt got to his feet and trotted down the road to where the car sat, dark and silent now, with one front fender wadded around a stanchion of the roadway fence. The damage seemed slight enough, and he could see that the one person in the car was moving. He stuck his head in the window and discovered that the driver was a girl. He would have expected her to be feeling herself for broken bones, but, oddly, she was touching the various instruments of the car and muttering, "A floor shift? A choke?" as if she'd never seen such things before.

Matt asked, "Are you all right?"

Without looking up, the girl said, still to herself, "It's Mrs. Bascom's old car."

"You'd better get out for a minute," said Matt. "It might just catch fire." He reached past her and turned off the ignition key, on the chance that gasoline might be spilling from some rupture.

"No," said the girl in a remote voice, "it didn't catch fire." But she obediently climbed out and let Matt lead her a few yards along the road. There she stood and stared at the car, while Matt unobtrusively stared at her. She was in her mid-twenties, he judged. "A little small girl," he liked to describe her afterward, "but nowhere *too* small."

"This happened a long time ago," she said, still in that faraway sort of voice. She looked at Matt and added, "You weren't there when it did." He said nothing, waiting for her head to clear, which it obviously needed doing.

She was clear enough about one thing, though: the car showed no sign of bursting into flame. Matt went back to it, leaned in and tried the light switch; the big lamps came on and lit up the whole hillside. Evidently the girl had just bumped the knob in the sudden stop. Matt slid onto the seat, turned the key and trod on the starter; the car thrummed immediately into life. He turned it off again, but left the lights on,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and went up to the front to look at the folded-up fender and the burst tire that was responsible. Then he came back to the girl.

"It's not hurt much," he said. "How about you?"

She still seemed disoriented. "I was coming up the hill . . . *there*," she murmured, and Matt nodded corroboration. "I was hurrying to get the car back before Mrs. Bascom woke up from her nap. The tire blew out—let's see, back *there*—and I had to wrestle with the wheel. Then I hit that post and tore up the fender."

"Sure did," said Matt. "I take it you haven't had much experience driving that car."

"It was the first time. A fool thing to do, really. But Mrs. Bascom never let Anthony do more than twenty miles an hour when he was chauffeuring us. And after he got drafted nobody drove it at all. So that afternoon, when she was asleep, I thought, I'll just see what a Rolls-Royce can *do*."

"Do just about anything, a Rolls-Royce, even one that age," said Matt. "You can't blame the car for the way tires are these days. The tire that blew, it must have been on about its third retread."

"This is all so vivid," said the girl, still looking curiously about her. Then her eyes came back to Matt; he noted that they were deep blue and, even in puzzlement, beautiful. The eyes now went up and down him. "But *you* weren't there," she repeated. Matt glanced at her head; the burnished brown hair was not visibly disarranged, but he wondered if there might be a concussion underneath it.

"And nobody came," the girl continued. "I finally had to walk all the way back to town. To a garage."

"Amos's," Matt suggested. "But you don't have to—"

"The man came out and changed the tire, but he couldn't do anything about the fender. By the time I got back to the house, Mrs. Bascom had been up for hours, and she was furious. When she saw the fender—" the girl giggled slightly, "—she fired me on the spot."

Matt said soothingly, "No, she won't."

"Oh, it turned out for the best," said the girl, as if she were soothing him in turn. "I wasn't really cut out for a lady's companion."

"Well," said Matt, clearing his throat; he was beginning to feel a little disoriented himself. "Like you say, I can't do anything about the fender, but I can change the tire. Then maybe, before you go home, you'd better drive back to town and have Doc Fitz look at that bump on your head."

The girl blinked. "I don't have any bump on my head." She blinked again, and this time tears welled up. "I have a lump in my

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

middle and—and—it's got to be cut out . . ." The tears brimmed over; she sat down on one of the fence stanchions and put her hands to her face.

Matt was scared. He glanced beseechingly up and down the road, but not another vehicle was in sight. He hurried to the Rolls, opened its trunk and began scrabbling for the jack and tools. He had just remembered that the County Sanitarium was back there on the other side of town, the direction this car had come from. He'd never heard of them losing any really dangerous inmates, but . . .

He had the car tilted up on the jack and was unscrewing the wheel nuts before the girl finished her cry. "This is really the most remarkable thing," said her voice from directly behind him. "I wonder what that last drug *was* they gave me. I've never had a dream so realistic." He felt her finger poke his shoulder, and she added, "You're quite solid." Matt froze for a moment and his back hair tingled eerily; he wondered if he had left any wrench within her reach. But all she did was come around to kneel in the headlight glow in front of where he was working.

"You see," she said, with a kind of half-laugh forcing its way between her words, "I'm Stella Waters and I'm a gray-haired, wrinkled, middle-aged woman."

"You don't look it," Matt managed to mumble. His gaze took in the trim figure, radiant eyes, flawless complexion and wavy brown hair that, now in the light, showed a tinge of red.

"I'm Stella Waters," she said again, insistently. "This is the year 1969 and I was fifty-two on my last birthday. Right this minute I'm lying in bed in a hospital on East 92nd Street, all doped up, and sometime tomorrow they're going to operate."

Matt hurried on with his work, sweating, although the night was getting downright chilly.

"And at the same time, here I am, like Alice behind the glass, trying to explain my dream to the characters in it." She almost smiled. "I'm sorry. That didn't sound nice, calling you a character."

"Don't worry about anything," said Matt, with forced cheeriness. "We'll get you back safe to the hospital."

Stella went on as if she hadn't heard him. "It's pleasant to dream of being young again, but I wonder why I should hark back to this particular episode. It must have been twenty-four? . . . twenty-five? . . . years ago. Mrs. Bascom had moved us down here out of Washington; she was afraid there'd be air raids. The war was still on." She looked at Matt's uniform. "That's why you're wearing a soldier suit, isn't it?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Matt nodded numbly, unable to think of anything to say aloud except possibly Help! Help!

"You weren't there when this happened," she mused, for the third time. "And I don't remember you from anywhere else. Do I know your name?"

He was so rattled by now that he barely knew it himself. "Matt—uh—Matthew. Matthew Meldrum."

She shook her head and said, "I never heard it before. This *is* curious. The dream is all just the way it really happened that time, except for you. And you don't seem like a dream-person at all, Mister—Corporal Meldrum."

"Matt."

"What were you doing, Matt, standing out here in the middle of nowhere, with the night coming on?"

"The Norfolk bus will be along in a while," he said. "It bypasses the town, but it'll stop out here if you signal." With some notion of keeping her occupied, he went on talking. "I was going to catch it if nothing else came along, but I was hoping I'd get a lift first. Either way will get me into Norfolk in the morning, but thumbing would save bus fare." He rolled the crippled wheel back to the trunk and brought the spare one up front.

"See, today's the last day of my leave. So far, I've just been going around saying hello and goodbye to friends and relations. Now I'd like to spend the last few hours on myself." He hefted the new wheel onto the lugs and began replacing the nuts.

"I'm due in at Fort Eustis tomorrow. Report 12 March, the orders say. But I figure, well, March 12th is not over until midnight, so. I've got until 11:59 tomorrow night to report in. And when I get to Norfolk, I aim to do the town, right up to that last minute. Saving the four-dollar bus fare might make the difference between painting the town red and just painting it pink."

Stella smiled at that, but a thought occurred to her and the smile faded. "You were saying goodbye. Then this was your embarkation leave?"

"Well, the Army doesn't exactly tell you so. But when you're reporting to Fort Eustis, and Eustis is right on the doorstep of Norfolk, and Norfolk is a shipping-out port . . ."

"I'm sorry," she said.

Matt shrugged. "I can't complain. I've had two years as cadre down at Bragg. My turn could have come a lot sooner."

"Twelve March," Stella said thoughtfully. "What year?"

"Why, *this* year, of course. I told you, tomorrow—"

"I mean—" She gestured impatiently. "I don't remember exactly. What year is this?"

Matt had momentarily forgotten that the girl was crazy. "Nine-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

teen-forty-four," he said, and went desperately back to work.

"March, 1944 . . ." she said, still thoughtfully. Then, with a little gasp, "You're going to England. The build-up for the invasion. D-day!"

Matt shrugged again. "Well . . . you never know . . . rumors . . ."

"No, I remember distinctly. D-day was June 6th, 1944. I was in Washington."

Matt stood up in a hurry and glared up and down the road. There wasn't a spy visible, nor much of anything else, but he growled warningly, "If you heard anything like that in Washington, you better keep quiet about it."

"No, no, no! After Mrs. Bascom fired me I headed back north, and I was in Washington when it *happened*. There was all kinds of celebration. June 6th—'the longest day,' somebody called it later. The landings were in Normandy. Omaha Beach was one."

Matt knew that Normandy was in France, and somehow he doubted that the French would have named one of their beaches Omaha. But all the same, his back hair was again prickling uncomfortably. A crazy woman might fancy herself a prophet, but would she throw in so many *details?*

"I guess," Stella said wistfully, "neither one of us has much to look forward to, tomorrow."

In silence, but thinking hard, Matt gave one final angry twist to the wheel nuts, replaced the hub cap, lowered the jack, stowed the tools in the trunk and came back to the front of the car to confront Stella.

"Look," he said. "Level with me. You're too pretty a girl to have anything wrong with her. Do you really, honestly think you're walking around in a dream?"

"I can't think anything else. How do you know you're *not?*"

Pointedly, he looked down at his uniform of palpable and scratchy olive-drab wool, no longer very well pressed. He kicked one of his all-too-solid combat boots against the other. He examined his square and muscular hands, now rather dirty. "Damn it," he said at last, "I didn't just pop out of nowhere, Miss Waters. I remember being on leave—even the drunk parts—and two years of duty before that, and basic before that, and living in this town for twenty-some years before that, and . . ."

"Then try to understand how I feel. Everything has been just as real for me. I remember living in this town, too—for a little while—at this very time. But I remember a whole quarter of a century more on top of that! Places and people and events, right up until the minute in the hospital when they gave me shots to stop the pain and put me to sleep."

As diplomatically as he knew how, Matt inquired if that hospi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tal could by any chance be the County Sanitarium back yonder. He was somewhat abashed when this made Stella actually laugh with humor for the first time. "Well, all right," he said sheepishly. "But it wouldn't hurt to stop by Doc Fitz's and let him have a look at you."

"I have my own doctor," said Stella, "and promise to consult him the minute I wake up. But I feel first-rate, Matt. At this moment I feel better than I have in years and years. Whatever's going on, I may as well enjoy it as long as it lasts."

"My bus will be along in a minute," said Matt. "But I don't feel right about leaving you on your own."

"Afraid I *will* talk myself into that asylum?" she asked, with an impish grin.

"Go around talking about invasions, you may find yourself in worse than that. No, I meant driving this car in the dark. You may not remember the roads after all these years."

When Matt heard what his own voice had just said—"after all these years"—he gulped in astonishment at himself. Was he beginning to take this girl seriously?

"Yes," she said, nibbling a fingernail. "You're right about the driving. And I'm not too eager to repeat that scene with Mrs. Bascom. I wonder if we could change the ending . . ."

Matt looked at her, then down the road, where another set of headlamps was approaching. He could see the lighted panel above them, too: it was the Greyhound coming.

Stella followed his gaze, and said quickly, "Why don't you drive? We'll go on to Fort Eustis. Mrs. Bascom can't get *much* madder." Matt hesitated; the rumble of the bus was audible now, and Stella hastened to add, "It's not many soldiers that go to war in a Rolls-Royce."

And with a beautiful girl alongside, thought Matt. Then his conscience prodded him and pointed: technically a stolen car; obviously an addled girl; are you going crazy, too? But in that moment of indecision, something kept him from raising his arm to signal. With an up-down flick of its lights, the big bus thundered past and was gone.

Matt sighed, opened the car door for the girl, threw his duffel bag into the back, then went around to climb in on the driver's side, not quite knowing why he was doing this.

Simple. He had just succumbed to a yearning common to every soldier on the brink of shipping out: the "regiment leaves at dawn" syndrome. Every soldier, in those dwindling hours, seeks one last extraordinary experience to carry with him in memory. Ideally, a strange door on a dark street

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

opens, and behind it there's a damsel in distress, a romantic adventure, a poignant parting. In reality, no matter how hard they search and how drunk they get, few soldiers find more than a barroom brawl. Matt was one of the lucky few.

He put the car in gear and headed east, fully expecting that he would arrive at Fort Eustis to find the MPs waiting to arrest him for auto theft, maybe kidnapping to boot. But for now he was determined, as Stella had said, to enjoy the interlude as long as it lasted, and he made a deliberate effort to suspend all disbelief.

"I've read stories like this," he said, "where a person gets a chance to live a piece of life over again." He grinned in the dark. "I bet I know what happened. You *didn't* take Mrs. Bascom's car back to her. You kept on going and sold it somewhere—"

"I did not!" said Stella indignantly.

"—And the money set you up in a life of crime. Now you've repented in your old age and, someway, you've flashed back to that turning point in your life. And it's up to me to set you on the straight and narrow again."

Stella joined him in laughing at that, but she didn't laugh for long. "Nothing so dramatic," she said. "After I left Mrs. Bascom, I went back up north and got a teaching job. A good one, because of the manpower shortage, and I worked my way up quite rapidly. After a while, I was a high school principal. In time, I became an assistant superintendent. In time, I got old. No, nothing dramatic happened. Nothing happened at all."

"You never got married?"

He sensed her shaking her head. "When I first left home, I wanted to live for a while on my own. By the time I'd done that to my satisfaction, all the men worth marrying were off to war. By the time they came back, I was settled in my career—and, I suppose, settled in my old-maid ways. Oh, I had proposals, but I never married. Never fell in love." She paused, then added, "And now, at the hospital, I haven't had a single visitor."

Matt drove for a quarter of a mile before he said, "And now—this time around?" He instantly regretted the remark; it must have sounded leeringly suggestive, as nothing but silence ensued.

The silence continued for so long a time that he was framing an apology—when, astoundingly, Stella leaned over and kissed him on the cheek.

"This time," she said, "it's nice not to be alone."

I can only guess at the events of the rest of that night and the next day, because Uncle Matt always let his story get vague around

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

this point. Bear in mind that I first heard it when I was only eight or nine years old. At that age I had got interested in soldiering—another war was on, the Korean one this time—and I buddied up to Uncle Matt just to pump him for war stories. But he preferred telling this one. He told it often, and he told it as clearly as if it had happened only the day before—which is why I still remember it so well—but, as I say, he skipped some parts. Even if I hadn't been too young a confidant, I suppose he was naturally reluctant to share *all* his recollections.

I do recall one remark of Stella's, sometime during that night, that he repeated in a reminiscent murmur. "You can do anything in a dream," she said, "and just enjoy it. No explaining afterward, or apologies or remorse. Because when it's over, the dreamer is the only one who knows."

They never drove on into Norfolk at all. They took their time on the journey and spent some of it wandering through the old colonial village of Williamsburg and the ruins of Jamestown nearby. Even nowadays, bustling with tourists, those places evoke a sense of time folded back, a dreamy past remembered. Back then in the war years, totally empty and dark, they must have been ghost towns sure enough; fit places for two dream characters to stroll hand in hand, and embrace under the vast old trees, and cuddle together for warmth in the grand old car, with never a living eye to watch.

But time finally ran out. In the last few minutes before the next midnight, they sat in the car outside the guarded gates of Fort Eustis to say their goodbyes.

All that Matt could give her was an imprecise APO address, but he said urgently, "You will write, won't you?"

"If I can," she promised. "But suppose, the next time I blink my eyes, I wake up where I was before. Where you never happened."

"Suppose you don't. If you suppose it hard enough . . ."

Matt glanced unhappily from his wrist watch to the gate. It reminded Stella to say, "You might like to know, we won the war. Just a little more than a year from now, it's over in Europe. And in the Pacific just a few months after that."

"Well," said Matt. "That's something to look forward to."

"Then I probably shouldn't spoil it," said Stella, with a trace of bitterness in her voice. "But there's another war soon after that. And then another one."

"That's the history of the world," said Matt.

"I'm glad I don't know all the future," Stella went on. "Knowing my own is enough. Time goes on, and that means getting old. You wear out, finally, and that means—"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Sleep," said Matt. "And that means dreaming."

Stella looked a little surprised.

With hesitation, because he'd never had occasion to ponder on it before, Matt said, "All our lives, we laugh about our dreams and pay them no mind and forget them. Maybe that's because they're so short. If we could sleep long enough, maybe the dream would go on until *it* was the real thing and being awake wasn't."

Stella smiled indulgently and asked, "What if the dream was a nightmare?"

"I guess," said Matt, "we get what we deserve. If this one so far was any sample, you and I deserve the best." At that, he kissed her for the last time—and went away to war.

Matt never heard from Stella again. During the next hectic couple of months, he didn't have much time to wonder why. And, in the harshly realistic world of the Army, the notion that she really *might* have blinked herself out of existence seemed too idiotic to contemplate. He wrote to her, once before the troopship sailed and again from England, addressing the letters "c/o Mrs. Bascom." When they elicited no reply, he wondered vaguely if the old lady had been too angry about the car to forward them to Stella. Then, after another while, he tucked the whole episode away as just a pleasant, mysterious memory. When he thought about it at all, he was half inclined to consider it a benign, boozy aftereffect of the several going-away parties earlier in his leave.

Or so he did until just after dawn on Tuesday, June 6th, when his landing craft and several thousand others pushed off into the Channel, destination St. Laurent's beachhead "Omaha." Then he remembered all that Stella had said. And she was real to him again, from that day and through all the years afterward.

"But Uncle Matt!" I exclaimed, the first time he told me the story. "Didn't you ever try to *look* for her?"

And then, young as I was, I could have bit my tongue for what I'd blurted. Uncle Matt couldn't look; he was blind. He'd never got farther than Omaha Beach, and the "Atlantic Wall" defending it, and a concrete bunker in that wall, and a flamethrower nozzle snaking out from a slit.

He wouldn't have gone to look for Stella even if he could. The fire had caught him full in the face and destroyed more than his eyes. I suppose it was a mercy that he hadn't kept his sight, for more than the reason that he never saw his own face in a mirror. Neither could he notice me growing up, and his sister—my mother—growing older. And so, to him, no one else ever aged either. Although Stella had actu-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ally told him how the years had changed her, Matt forever saw her as he had at first: in the glow of that old car's headlights. Her bright eyes never dulled, her shining face never withered, the red glints in her hair never faded to gray. "Beautiful," he said, every time he mentioned her during the rest of his life.

That wasn't long. He had breathed in those flames that hit him. When I was about twelve, his scarred lungs ceased their laboring and—I like to think—he went to sleep to finish that dream.

Now, right there would have been the end of this love story, or ghost story, or whatever it is—except for what happened this morning: that same Rolls-Royce appearing out of nowhere.

It took me quite a while to type up the item when I got back to the newspaper office, because I kept brooding the whole time, trying to puzzle out some connection between today's event and Matt's reminiscences. As soon as the paper was off the press, I came home with a copy of it and went straight to the attic to rummage out the things of Uncle Matt's that my mother had stored away. In a manila envelope I found a plastic case—the Purple Heart, some campaign ribbons—and a few relevant documents, among them a copy of the mimeographed orders that had sent Matt overseas.

I laid the yellowing old orders and my still-damp newspaper side by side on a table and looked at the dates: 1944 on the one, 1969 on the other. Twenty-five years apart, I said to myself, a nice neat number for an anniversary. But there was one rub. The orders, as Matt had well remembered, read "report Fort Eustis, Va., 12 March . . ." and the date on my newspaper was "December 18 . . ."

If there's a dream world, an afterworld, or any other kind of extranatural world, there's no reason why it has to keep time to the same calendar we do. But if that spook car *was* going to conform to our calendar and commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Matt's and Stella's meeting, it should rightly have shown up back in March. Why the untidy discrepancy?

And then I realized. And I picked up the phone and called the County Airport. There's a plane out for New York at ten tonight, and I'll be on it.

I'm sure about New York being the place, though Stella never said so. She did mention that her hospital was on East 92nd Street, and of all the cities north of here that have as many as ninety-two streets, New York is the only one that divides them east and west.

I don't expect to find Stella. She won't still be in that hospital. I guessed a long time ago that she never woke up from the sedative

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they gave her that night in March. But I've also guessed that she was wrong when she lamented to Matt that there was no one to visit her there.

The way I figure it, her meeting with Matt did "change the ending" of things. This time around, there *was* somebody else in Stella's life. The hospital records will tell me who, and that's the person I'm flying to meet. Because I looked again at the dates on Matt's orders and on my newspaper—and it occurred to me to count the interval between them, from mid-March to mid-December. A few days more than nine months.

Nine months.

Granted, the baby could have been a boy, in which case I'm flying north just for the satisfaction of knowing the end of the story. But the fool way that old Rolls-Royce meandered into town this morning, it practically shouted "woman driver!" If I'm right, the reappearance of that car celebrated the birthday of Stella's daughter. So she turned twenty-five today. And if she's as beautiful as her mother was, I'd better hurry.

Coming Soon

1969 is F&SF's twentieth year of publication, and we have several special things planned for this anniversary year, including a 20th anniversary issue (more later about this). Meanwhile, we are pleased to report that we have a new two-part novel by **Poul Anderson** on hand. Its title is OPERATION CHANGELING (long-time readers will remember the popular "operation" stories that have previously appeared here), and it is scheduled to begin in the May issue. The March and April issues will feature stories by **R. Bretnor, Larry Niven, P. M. Hubbard, Robert Silverberg, Sterling Lanier** (further adventures of Brigadier Donald Ffellowes), and **Evelyn E. Smith's** first sf story in five years, CALLIOPE AND GHERKIN AND THE YANKEE DOODLE THING, about the rock/radical generation and green-furred aliens, among (many) other things. Stay tuned.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE MAGAZINE OF Fantasy and Science Fiction

MARKET PLACE

BOOKS-MAGAZINES

"FANTASY COLLECTOR," monthly SF bargains, sample 10¢, P. O. Box 550, Evergreen, Colorado 80439.

SCIENTIFANTASY *specialist:* Books, *magazines.* Free catalog. Gerry de la Ree, 7 Birchwood, Saddle River, N.J. 07458.

All three issues of P.S. Magazine for $1.50. Humor and nostalgia by Jean Shepherd, Nat Hentoff, Isaac Asimov, Alfred Bester, William Tenn, others. *Mercury, Box 271, Rockville Centre, N.Y.*

Contact Fandom, Fanzines, 12 for $1.00 Johnson, 345 Yale Avenue, Hillside, N.J. 07205.

SPECIALISTS: Science Fiction, Fantasy, Weird Fiction. Books, Pocketbooks. Lists issued. Stephen's Book Service, 67 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10003.

SF Bargains. List free. Werewolf Bookshop, Verona 4G, Pa. 15147.

RARE, USED, OUT-OF-PRINT SF, Fantasy, Horror. Free lists. The Haunted Bookshop, Box 311, Hewlett, N. Y. 11557

Science Fiction and Fantasy back issues magazines, books, pocketbooks , 5 for $1.15. Free lists. Gerald Weiss, 92 South 2nd Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11211.

CONTROVERSIAL! UNINHIBITED! S-F authors and readers clash in SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW. Two issues $1. Box 3116, Santa Monica, Calif. 90403.

DESTINY—the newest SF magazine. Exciting strip fiction. Intriguing text fiction. Hauntingly illustrated. 50¢. Dan McAvoy, 5720 Middaugh, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515.

SF MAGAZINES—send list of issues wanted for prices. Midtown Books, 2229 Fletcher, Chicago, Illinois, 60618.

30,000 magazines for sale; science fiction, western, detective, adventure, others. We buy collections, too. Send list, enclosing stamp. Magazine Center, Box 214, Little Rock, Ark. 72203.

THE MYSTERY LOVER'S NEWSLETTER, *a fanzine* for detective fiction. Bimonthly. $2.00 yearly. Box 107, Revere, Massachusetts 02151

For Sale: Astounding, Amazing, Wonder, Weird Tales, Unknown, 1927/1968. Hugh McKenna, 734 11th, Seaside, Oregon 97138

Mack Reynolds, fantasy, more! 40¢ to HEROIC, 8 Perry Street, Union City, Pa. 16438.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

FREE BOOK "990 Successful, Little-Known Businesses." Work home! Plymouth, 335-T, Brooklyn, New York 11218.

Do you have something to advertise to sf readers? Books, magazines, typewriters, telescopes, computers, space-drives, or misc. Use the F&SF Market Place at these low, low rates: $3.00 for minimum of ten (10) words, plus 30¢ for each additional word. Send copy and remittance to: Adv. Dept., Fantasy and Science Fiction, 347 East 53 Street, New York, N. Y. 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HYPNOTISM

FREE Hypnotism, Self-Hypnosis, Sleep learning Catalog! Drawer G400, Ruidoso, New Mexico 88345.

Free Illustrated, Hypnotism Catalogue. Write Powers, 8721 Sunset, Hollywood, California 90069.

LEARN WHILE ASLEEP Hypnotize with your recorder, phonograph. Astonishing details, sensational catalog free. Sleep-learning Research Association, Box 24-FS, Olympia, Washington, 98502.

STAMPS

121 DIFFERENT Flag stamps free. Approvals. W-B Stamps, Wilkes-Barre, Pa. 18703.

MISCELLANEOUS

FOREIGN EDITIONS of Fantasy and Science Fiction. A few copies of British, French, Spanish, German, and Italian editions available at 60¢ each; any four for $2.—Mercury Press, Box 271, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571.

Studies in Force Fields, Time and Space: financial project development contact IBEA, R. Mario Cardim, 398, ap. 23, Sao Paulo, S.P., Brasil.

YOUR MARKET PLACE

A market is people—alert, intelligent, active people.

Here you can reach 180,000 people (averaging three readers per copy —60,000 paid circulation). Many of them are enthusiastic hobbyists—collecting books, magazines, stamps, coins, model rockets, etc.—actively interested in photography, music, astronomy, painting, sculpture, electronics.

If you have a product or service of merit, tell them about it. The price is right: $3.00 for a minimum of ten (10) words, plus 30¢ for each additional word. To keep the rate this low, we must request remittance with the order.

Advertising Dept., Fantasy & Science Fiction
347 East 53 St., New York, N. Y. 10022

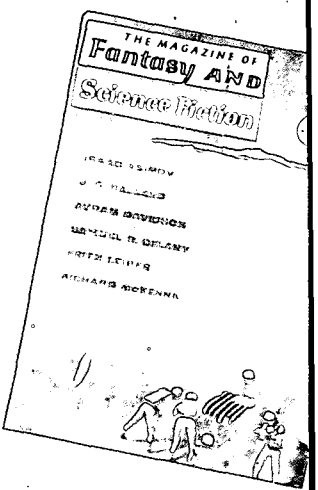
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A MERCURY PUBLICATION

The Imprint of Quality

(since 1937)

THE MAGAZINE OF
Fantasy AND
Science Fiction



F&SF's readers are both young (84% under 45) and educated (62% have attended college). When they want relaxation or stimulation in reading, they turn to the best works of imagination and to FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION. "F&SF regularly supplies the finest the field has to offer in the way of short fiction"—*Clifton Fadiman.* Compelling fiction, along with informative and stimulating features on *Books* (Judith Merril) and *Science* (Isaac Asimov), have earned F&SF its reputation as tops in the field.

Spanish Edition

French Edition

German Edition

Joseph W. Ferman, *Publisher*

MERCURY PRESS, INC. • 347 East 53 Street, New York, N. Y. 10022

LICENSED TO NNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED